

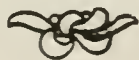
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A Daughter of the North

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Lawrence," etc.



With Five Drawings by C. E. Tillotson

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“Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.”

1 Cor. 11:11.

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A Daughter of the North.

CHAPTER I.

THE REGATTA.



IT was an ideal day for the sailing. The choppy waves of the sea danced merrily before the North Sea breeze. The sky was filled with flying clouds, soft and white, and the deep blue beyond showed in patches of changeable sizes and shapes.

The Norwegian coast stood out bold against the sea and sky. The dark green pines reached to the water's edge, save where a rocky headland jutted out from the forest and met the sea with a wall of solid rock. A few islands broke the coast line to the north, but otherwise there was a clear sweep of the vision to where the sea and the sky met on the horizon.

The town of Langesund lies at the entrance to that beautiful sheet of water, Skien Fjord, about one hundred miles from Christiania. The little town was now decked in holiday attire, for the annual meeting of the national regatta was to be held at the city of Brevik, a few miles up the fjord, and the races were to be sailed

on the course outside the harbor of Langesund.

The boats began to arrive on the course early. They came from the north coast and the south coast; but most of them, having arrived the day before and passed the night at Brevik, now came sailing down the fjord, a long procession of white-winged boats. There were at least a hundred of them, large and small, gathered at the starting point. Excursion steamers were crowded with sight-seers; tugs were converted into passenger boats; fishing smacks were now pleasure boats. Everything that would float on the ruffled water outside the harbor was pressed into service that day.

One of the last of the boats that sped down the waters of the fjord to the open sea was a graceful craft, painted white and bearing the name of the "Swan." Captain Halvor Steen sat at the helm. A steamer-load of people cheered him as he passed, as an expression of admiration for the young man, who was well known among his pleasure-faring countrymen. He waved his cap in return as his boat turned gracefully in towards the starting line.

The first gun from the judges' boat was fired just as the "Swan" arrived. This signal was for the boats in class one to get ready. The "Swan" belonged to class two, so she had plenty of time to swing around into position.

Only one boat of class one crossed the line, so no race was declared. The interest now

centered on class two, in which there were five entries. They were maneuvering to get into position, and when the signal was given, four boats crossed the line nearly abreast.

The sailing was over a triangular course. The first angle was against the wind, and the boats immediately began to tack, which soon separated them so that each had free space to the first turning point.

Halvor Steen and his crew were confident of winning. The "Swan" had never yet disappointed them. She was now behaving splendidly. The wind and the sea were favorable to them, and they were well in the lead. Half way to the first turn, it was plainly seen that there were but three boats in the race,—the "Swan," the "Virga" and a blue-painted boat which had slipped over the line a little late and had tacked away from the "Swan," but which was now well in front.

"Halvor," asked Sven, the "Swan's" sailing master, "what boat is that coming along third? Her next tack will bring her well up."

Captain Steen leveled his glass at the blue boat. He gave a surprised whistle, lowered his glass, adjusted it, and looked again.

"It's the Blue Bird," said he.

"No!"

"Yes, it's the 'Blue Bird,' and Froken Heldman herself is at the helm." He handed the glass to his friend.

"You're right. Didn't you know?"

"I had no idea she was going to race this year. In fact, she told me herself that she had given up the sea. Well, well, Sven, we'll have a run for our money."

The "Swan" turned into the eye of the wind, and her sails for an instant flapped loosely, then as the wind filled the canvas, she sped on. One more tack ought to bring them to the turn. The "Virga" was close in, and the "Blue Bird" now crossed the track of the "Swan" not far behind. Both crews cheered as they passed, Froken Heldman waving her kerchief in response to Captain Steen's lifted cap.

And now they all steered for the turn. The "Swan" led, the "Virga" was a close second, and the "Blue Bird" followed as third. They all rounded gracefully, and adjusting their sails to the new course, they sped on their way. The breeze continued strong, the sails pulled hard, the tilted bows cut the water like knives.

The three boats kept very nearly their relative position during the hour it took them to reach the second turn. Once around that, and the wind was perfect for a swift race to the finish. Captain Steen feared this last leg of the triangle, for he knew what the "Blue Bird" could do in such a wind and sea. So he looked carefully to his own boat, seeing that every rope was in place and that every inch of canvas was doing its work. With the spectators, the interest was

now high. Most of the slow-moving craft steered to the finish to see the outcome.

Halvor Steen turned his glass oftener to the "Blue Bird" than to the one which was giving him the closer race. Froken Heldman was still at the tiller, where, no doubt, she would stay to the finish; for all who knew her knew also that no man there could better fill the place.

The "Swan" rounded the second buoy, and with a big curve and not a flap of sail, she pointed her nose to the final goal. The "Virga" did the same. Just as the "Blue Bird" got well around the buoy, there sprang out from her mass of canvas, another sail, big and white like a magic blossom. The wind caught it and shaped it into a bulging form, which tugged at the rigging and was in danger of wrecking the small craft. The boat keeled, she dipped till the leeward deck touched the water. With a bound she rushed through the sea. A white wave curved at her bow, and a shower of spray drenched the deck. Slowly, as if reluctantly, she righted herself, and then could be seen a row of men clinging to the windward rail to act as ballast. The boat passed the "Virga," and was fast lessening the distance between herself and the "Swan."

Captain Steen saw what the skipper of the "Blue Bird" had done when it was nearly too late. "More canvas," he shouted to his men. "Crowd it on. Quick, men;" and the men obeyed.

The "Virga" was certainly out of the race. Her skipper tried to put on more sail, but he had to take it in again, at which his boat dropped hopelessly in the rear. The crowds on near-by steamers cheered, and the excitement ran high. Now the race was between Captain Steen and Froken Heldman, and the fact that a daughter of the north was giving the captain the race of his life, added greatly to the zest of the sport. There was some danger too in this crowding on canvas to the limit, for who could tell just where the limit was, and after that, what then? Captain Steen looked hurriedly at his rival, now not many feet away, and his fear of defeat was mixed with admiration for the girl. She sat with firm hand on the tiller. Her cap had fallen from her head, and her long brown hair was flying in the wind. Her eyes shone, her cheeks glowed, her lips were set. She might have been a beautiful water-nymph instead of the Atelia Heldman he knew so well. Halvor Steen's wonder grew with his admiration.

But there was no time for such thoughts now. If he was to win this race he must bend every energy to his work. The "Blue Bird" was slowly, but surely gaining on him.

"Can we stand a little more canvas?" asked Captain Steen of his sailing master.

"Not another thread."

"Then I fear we're beaten."

The two boats were beautiful things to see.

The "Blue Bird" in making her spurt had taken the windward side, but she was keeping far enough away from her rival not to take her wind.

The breeze was splendid, a strong steady blow which occasionally tipped the larger waves with white. The clouds had become darker, and there were signs of rain in the west. White sails dotted the water in every direction, for there were the third and fourth class boats taking part in their own races.

Attention, however, for the time was centered in the two big incoming boats. In fifteen or twenty minutes they would cross the line, and which would be first, was not easy to say. The "Blue Bird" to all appearances was still a few feet behind, but the fact that she was slowly but surely gaining meant much at the final. The two crews worked with every nerve and muscle tense. Though the two boats were within speaking distance, not even a glance was exchanged between the crews.

Steadily, and without the flutter of a thread, the two racers cleave the water. Every man is still; there is no time for change or adjustment now, even if any such were thought of. The half-mile or so of the course remaining must be sailed without the loss of a foot. With delicate skill Captain Steen and Froken Heldman move the rudders of their boats as if holding the reins of steeds that must win a race. Now they are

even, racing nose to nose; now the "Blue Bird" creeps ahead of the "Swan" inch by inch during the last quarter of a mile. On they come, steady, swift, beautiful as things of life. They are near the line, — they cross, the "Blue Bird" nearly half a length ahead.

The crowd of spectators, waiting in silent expectancy during the final moments, now breaks into tremendous cheering. Such a ringing of bells and blowing of whistles was never heard before, at any sailing of the national regatta.

CHAPTER II.

THE BALL AT BREVIK.



FIFTY or more sail boats lay at anchor all in a row at Brevik's west wharf. Not a ripple disturbed their perfect repose. Their sails were tightly furled. Not a light gleamed from any deck; they were as if wrapped in peaceful sleep, resting from the exciting exertions of the day.

The Norwegian summer night is never very dark, and so this evening the stars in the clearing sky, struggling against the light of day, made a poor showing. The little town of Brevik, its houses clustered on its rocky hills, shone with the light of lamps. Many people walked back and forth along its narrow, crooked streets.

A hoarse whistle was heard from the bay, and the crowds moved toward the wharf. A large, well-lighted steamer came in and lay alongside the pier. Across the gang-plank streamed a merry company of visitors to the town to participate in the final ceremonies attendant on the sailing of the national regatta. There was hurrying of officials, greeting of friends, talk and laughter. Everybody seemed happy and gay.

Hotel Nord faces one of Brevik's broadest streets. At the rear of the hotel, next to the beach and a pier extending out into the water, there is a narrow strip of park. Hotel Nord's ball room, where the events of the evening were to center, opened on to this little garden. This room was not a protentious one. The usual board and paneled walls were decorated with flags and evergreens. Three heavy chandeliers filled with lamps hung from the ceiling. The platform in one end of the room was adorned with a portrait of the King, draped in colors; and prominently among the flags was the pennant of the victorious "Blue Bird."

The people were slow in arriving; when they did come, they gathered into groups to exchange greetings and discuss the events of the day. Just as the musicians were tuning-up their instruments, a gray-haired man in uniform mounted the platform and rapped for order. Most of the people found seats, and conversation ceased.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the official, "the committee on prize awards wish to make their announcements before dancing is engaged in."

After reviewing the day's races, he announced the prizes and the prize winners. He began with the smaller boats, so that he might work up to a fitting climax with the statement that a true daughter of the North, the daughter of his old friend, Captain Heldman, had won the highest

honors of the day. The crowd grew still at this, and taking advantage as well as courage by the attitude of his audience, he went on paying a glowing tribute to all the daughters, and all the mothers of the North. "They are capable, and they are worthy," said he, "to be our equals in every good thing. After a while, all you good women will cast your ballot with your brothers, and some of you will sit with them in the law making body of our land."

"Hear, hear, Hurrah!"

"Listen, all of you ladies," continued the speaker after the tumult had subsided; "let me give you this bit of advice: when that time comes, when you may be matched with your brothers for high honors, win your race as fairly as Froken Atelia Heldman has won hers this day."

"We will, we will!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, one more announcement: Froken Heldman this afternoon waited upon this committee and stated that she would gladly accept the prize cup, but that we were to divide the money which she fairly won between the Sailor's Home at Bredesund and the Fisherman's Fund of Brevik."

The speaker ended and came down from the platform amid the cheers of a large company. Then, just as the musicians again made ready to begin, Captain Heldman entered the ball room

with his daughter Atelia on his arm. They received an ovation.

Captain Heldman was over seventy, and his steps were not strong, though this evening he tried to bring back his sturdy sea-legs of younger days. His weather-beaten face wore a pleasant smile as he marched into the hall with the prize winner on his arm. And as friends gathered around them with their congratulations, he was very, very happy.

And what a glorious picture that prize winner made that evening as she walked across the floor with her gray-haired sire at her side! Tall, taller than he, she seemed; straight as a pine in Norway's woods, with a step as light and graceful as an open, natural life among the hills and seas of the North could make.

There are two distinct types of beauty among the daughters of the north. The story-tellers usually take the one with golden hair and blue eyes for their heroine, making her the sole type of northern beauty. Therein are they mistaken. There are girls in Norway of pure Norse blood, and they are not a few, whose dark hair, brown eyes, and ruddy cheeks and lips will compare favorably with the brunette beauty in any southern clime. Of this latter type was Atelia Heldman. The red in her cheeks shone from a skin clear and beautiful, but not light in complexion. Her eyes were of a soft brown shade. Her head was covered with a mass of dark hair,

nearly black. The perfect contour of chin and lips and cheeks added not only to beauty of face, but gave to it that quality hard to describe, but suggested by such words as lovely or sweet.

"Come, father," said Atelia, "you must sit down now. Here is a comfortable seat;" and she led him across the floor to where Halvor Steen was sitting. The old man caught Halvor by the hand as if he was indeed glad to meet him. With a merry twinkle in his eye, he congratulated him on making such a fine race, adding by the way of consolation that coming out second best in a contest with Froken Heldman is not so bad.

Halvor gallantly admitted that what the Captain said was true. "To be second best, one must necessarily be near to the best," he commented, "and to be near to Froken Heldman is to partake of some of the glory which surrounds her, eh, Captain?"

"True, my boy; congratulate yourself."

"I am trying to," said Halvor with a smile.

Then Captain Heldman launched out in a nautical explanation of the merits of the two boats and why the "Blue Bird" was the faster. The young man listened for a time, then turned to Atelia and asked her for the next dance.

"I dance very poorly," she replied, "but if you will help me, — I suppose I ought to try."

They glided on to the floor. Ah, very fitting and somewhat romantic, thought the company

when they saw the couple together. As for Halvor, he had a feeling that it was useless to be angry with such a creature; had she not just now admitted her dependence on him, and there was some comfort in that. But why had she entered the race? Why had she been so determined to beat him? He had asked himself the question a score of times. As she smiled up into his face in the dance, especially when she made a miss-step, he wondered still more what lay in that little head behind those beaming eyes.

After the dance, he led her out into the garden. Under the trees nearest the hall were lanterns and tables about which some were sitting, eating and drinking.

"Let us go down to the water," suggested Halvor.

"With pleasure," replied Atelia; "the ball-room is warm, and dancing is really a task."

They walked on in silence down to the pier, out to its end, and sat down on a seat by the flag-staff. The night wind was blowing, and Halvor adjusted his companion's wrap across her shoulders. The waves lapped the timbers of the wharf. A belated fishing smack was beating up against the wind. The stars shone more brightly above the pine-clad hills across the fjord.

"It's beautiful," said Atelia softly.

Halvor was silent, but his companion went on as if she did not notice his mood. She talked

of the wind and the weather and many other inconsequential things for a time, but her purpose seemed to fail.

"Halvor," she asked, "you are angry with me?"

He looked away across fjord and hills as though not willing to risk the light of her eyes.

"Why did you sail your boat against me?" he said at last.

"I wanted another race—just one; I'm through now."

"You told me six months ago that you were through with racing."

"Yes; but there was a reason, a special reason—Now Halvor, don't be angry,—I—"

"A reason? What do you mean? Why did you stay out of the race until the last minute? Why did you make such extraordinary efforts to win, even to the risking of yourself and crew with that balloon jib of yours? You are known up and down the coast as the equal of any sailor in your knowledge of handling a boat. Why this added honor?"

Atelia laughed at him. "Why, Halvor, I didn't think you would take it so to heart to be beaten by me."

"Well, of course I shouldn't, under ordinary conditions; but I did just this once so wish to win this race. I had a special reason, and here you came—"

"And spoiled it—too bad—I'm sorry."

"No, you're not sorry."

“Halvor,” she laid her hand on his arm, “I’m sorry that you are vexed, but I’m not sorry I beat you in the race. I wanted to beat you. I planned to beat you. I too, had a special reason for doing what I have done.”

“Why, what can that be?” he asked in some surprise at her frank statement.

“I, as well as you, may have reasons for not telling just now; but this I want you to believe of me, I wouldn’t injure you for the world. I want you to believe this.”

“I don’t know what to believe.”

“Believe that I am your friend, whether it looks that way or not.”

“I never was much of a hand at blind belief.”

Atelia arose, and turned her head away. The dance music came wailing on a breeze to them, and they caught the sound of gait from the ball room. “I must go back to father,” she said.

He slipped his hand under her arm as they walked back. “Forgive me,” he said, “for being such a churl. You had just as much right to sail and win the race as anybody. I’m like a silly boy that cries when beaten.”

“Don’t say that. I know—I can appreciate—”

“And here I am monopolizing all your time, when every captain in the fleet will want to dance with you.”

“I want to escape the captains but get to father,” she said. “How shall I do it?”

“Here, sit by this table and I’ll bring him out. Then we’ll have something to eat.”

They secured a table in a protected corner, and in a short time Halvor returned with Captain Heldman, who, after scolding his daughter good-naturedly for her neglect of him and her host of admirers in the ball room, sipped his coffee contentedly. “This reminds me,” he began, and then followed one of his stories when he was a young man. He had some interesting tales to tell of adventures on sea and land, for he had been around the world a good many times in his life.

“I humbly beg your pardon for intruding, but I knew no other way to get to speak to you,” said a young man, as he approached the group.

“Welcome, Hr. Larsen,” replied Captain Heldman, “we’re glad to see you. Here, sit down with us.”

The others also welcomed the new arrival warmly.

“I had to use my American tact, or ‘cheek’ as you would call it to get by the official door-keeper, but I made it, you see.”

“You said you had business with the prize winner. Is there an American—wealthy of course—who wants to buy the racing yacht that won the regatta, eh, Larsen?” asked the captain.

“Well, hardly that; but really I am intruding—I merely wanted to find out when you were going to Heimstad. You remember you said I

was to go with you, but no definite time was set."

"That's right. Atelia, when are we going home? I'm ready any time now."

"We have a number of appointments to fill, and then I am ready. Two or three days at the most," replied the girl.

"And how did you come to Brevik?" continued the captain. "I'll wager you came to see the races."

Hr. Larsen laughed away the idea.

"Did you see the race?" asked Atelia eagerly.

"I saw the race."

Captain Heldman slapped the young man on the back. "Good for you! Wasn't it great? Don't you think Hr. Steen here should feel greatly honored in being beaten as he was?"

"Well, there is something to that," agreed Hr. Larsen.

"Here, waiter, bring us a soda-pop." Then after the order had been taken, the old man went on in his most bantering, good-natured mood, "Think of it—a preacher, a missionary going to boat races."

"But father," began Atelia, as if coming to the rescue.

"Oh, there is no apology needed," said Hr. Larsen. "I went to the races because I wanted to see them. Of course, the special attraction was that I knew our friend, Hr. Steen here was to take part—I had no idea that Froken Heldman also was to sail;—and let me tell you Captain

Heldman that the religion I preach is one that does not bar manly sport and innocent pleasure. At home, I was the captain of a base-ball team. All that is good and true and beautiful belongs to my religion, and never yet have I seen anything more beautiful than that finish between the 'Swan' and the 'Blue Bird.'"

The waiter brought another bottle and glass. "And here you see," continued Hr. Larson, "a man who likes clean sport but doesn't like coffee nor beer nor wine. Thanks for the soda-pop; and here's to the winner,—and the gallant loser,—and the grand old captain!"

The ball went on in full swing. Now and then, gentlemen as they passed by, paused to exchange greetings and to express congratulations. Some of them looked as if they would like to ask Froken Heldman for a dance, but a lack of responsiveness in her prevented them, and they went on their way.

"Hr. Larsen," asked Hr. Steen, "where are you staying here in Larvik?"

"With a friend of mine, Brother Isaksen; and he's a most interesting man. As he is an old resident of the town, he knows its history well. Do you know, I learned from him that Brevik was once the headquarters of our mission in Norway. That was in the beginning of our work in this country. Some of the first elders were seamen, and a number of them bought one of the best and swiftest pilot boats in Norway, and

fitted it up for their purpose. They named it "Zions Løve," and for many years it was used in transporting missionaries from place to place in this country and in Denmark, says Brother Isaksen." They had some stirring times in those days.

"I should like to have sailed with them," said Atelia, as she, listening, leaned over the table.

"A true daughter of the north," remarked her father.

Before the ball closed, these four left. It was time, said Atelia, that her father should be in bed. Hr. Larsen bade the Captain good night at the door of his lodgings. Hr. Steen and Froken Heldman lingered a few moments, then as they parted, she held out her hand and asked:

"Am I forgiven?"

"Yes; am I?"

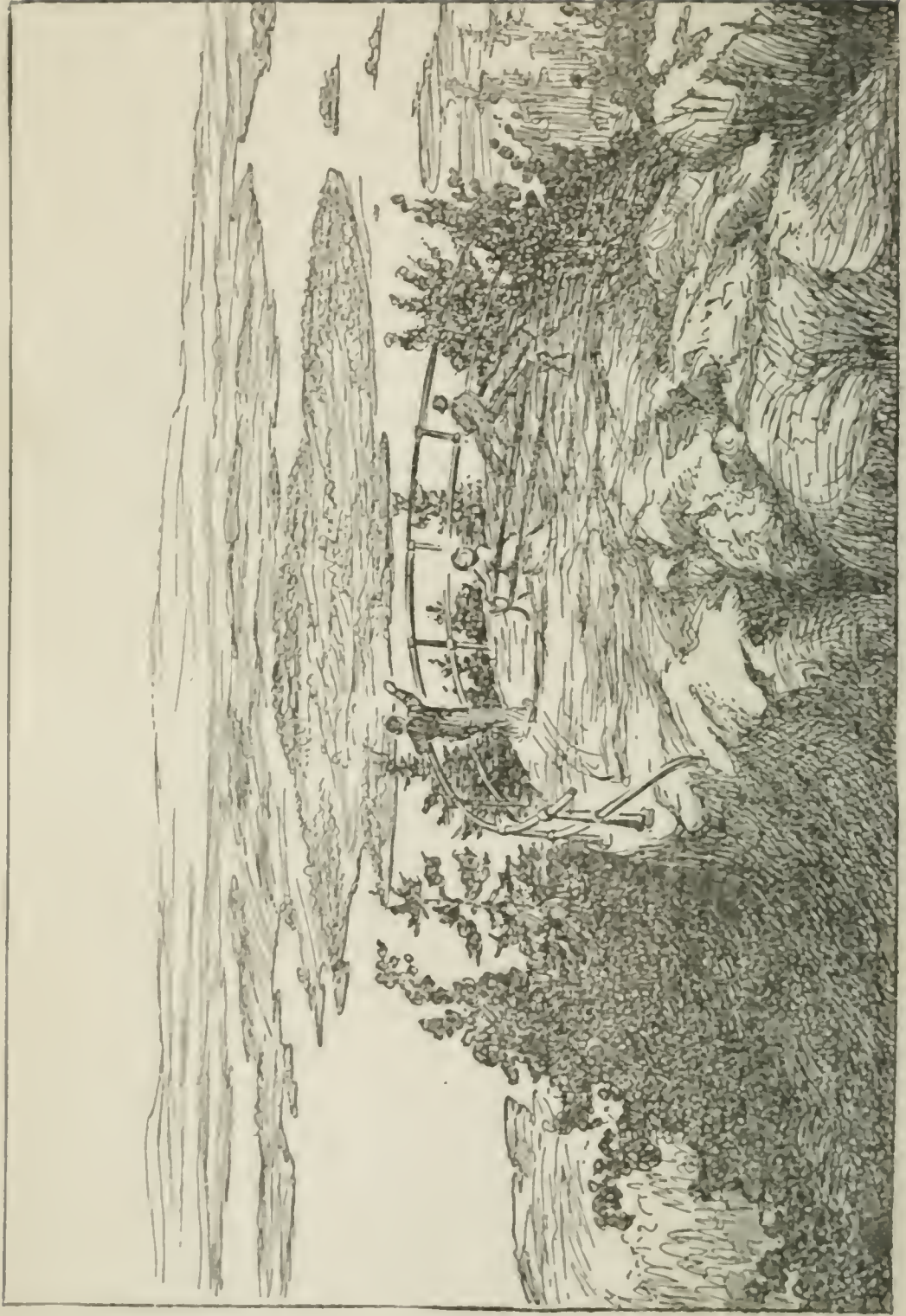
CHAPTER III.

HEIMSTAD.



ORWAY is certainly a land of "the mountain and the flood;" and among all its craggy mountains, pine-clad hills, green valleys, and blue lakes, no prospect is more beautiful than that of the valley of the Thorvand on the borders of Telemarken. A few miles steaming from the city of Skien brings the charms of the district into full view. A system of canals and locks connects the chain of lakes for a hundred miles into the uplands of Telemarken. A small but elegantly furnished steamer passes daily along this inland water route from the seaport, then climbing by means of the locks over waterfalls, through rivers, across deep blue lakes, up, up to the very base of glacier-clad mountains.

A few days after the regatta and the ball at Brevik, Captain Heldman, his daughter Atelia, and Hr Larsen sat on the deck of this steamer. The captain was warmly dressed to protect him from the cool winds from the mountains, but Froken Atelia was clad in her cool summer attire. Presently, the captain becoming drowsy, an easy chair was drawn up, and he went to sleep in it. Other groups of people under the



“A Land of ‘the Mountain and the Flood.’”

awning were playing cards, eating and drinking.

"Hr. Larsen, asked Atelia, "what would these good people around us think and say if they knew with whom I was in such close conversation?"

"They would be greatly alarmed at your safety, no doubt. It's a good thing that the fabulous horns do not grow on the young Mormons."

"Hush, don't say 'Mormon' so loudly. Those people over there know what part I took in the recent sailing, and I suppose they are talking about us."

"Then we'll talk about the scenery, which is here worth talking about."

"All right. Over on that hill there is a cave. Take my glass and find it. Do you see it?"

"Yes."

"Well, in olden times when monks and nuns lived here, worship was conducted in that cave. What out-of-the-way and romantic places those religionists had! Over there on that point is another old church, and on those distant hills to the left is where two Frenchmen, in 1870, alighted from a balloon in which they had escaped from Paris thirteen hours before."

The steamer swung around a curve of the river and into Lake Thorvand. The shrill whistle awoke the captain from his dose, and he got up preparatory to going ashore. The boat soon lay up to a landing where quite a flock of people had gathered. They had come to welcome home

from her victory their own Froken Atelia. The women in their picturesque dress, the men in their ugly brown and drab, the boys and girls shouting their welcomes made quite an animated scene. Hr. Larsen led the Captain down the plank to the pier, Atelia following with her wraps. The men shook the arrivals by the hand, the women and girls courtsied, and the boys lifted their caps. The baggage was soon loaded on a two-wheeled cart, and as the house was not far away, the three home-comers with their attendants followed up the road.

Heimstad house stood on the southern slope of the hill facing the lake. It was a large wooden structure, painted white. Captain Heldman's forefathers, over a hundred years ago, had placed the solid timbers in the main building, and they stood their today as firmly as ever. Additions had been made by wings on both sides, and the present owner had build a wide portico in front after the style of houses in warmer climes. This portico marked Heimstad for miles around.

Along the gentle slope of the hill some distance from the house were the barns and stables, and a little further on the houses of the tenants. Close by at the rear of the main building stood an odd-looking structure. It was built of curious timbers, the corners, the cornice, the door and window posts being carved into strange, fantastic figures. The upper story projected on all sides over the lower. Moss-covered stones held the

boards on the roof in place. This was the old "stabur" or storehouse which because of its picturesqueness Captain Heldman had left standing when he removed many of the other close adjuncts of the old "gaard."

"My mother, and hers, and hers again, back until it is lost in the myths of the past," explained Captain Heldman to his visitor, "went to that 'stabur' for food for their households. Some went with light steps because the store was ample, others with breaking hearts because of its meagerness; for our old land has seen its ups and downs, I tell you friend Larsen. The old 'stabur' as a reminder of the past is sacred to our family, and we would not think to lay a desecrating hand on one of its venerable, weather-beaten boards."

A broad, grassy slope stretched from the house to the waters of Thorvand. On one side the glass of a conservatory gleamed in the sun; close by was a garden containing strawberries, raspberries and the usual vegetables. On the other side of the lawn were walks through a grove of pine and birch. Above the house the forest extended to the top of the hill, but in all other directions were fields of hay and grain.

On top of the hill a wooden tower overlooked the forest. The Norwegian always wants some outlook. If there is no high hill or nearby swelling above the common level, or some rocky peak reaching above the forest on which one may

climb to view the wider prospect, then he builds a tower of timbers for the purpose. As Atelia Heldman and Hr. Larsen, on the afternoon of the next day after their arrival, climbed up into this tower, the visitor was at once charmed and surprised at what he saw. Heimstad was really located on a peninsula of the lake whose waters gleamed on three sides. Away in the far distance the lofty Dovre Mountains lay dim and blue against the sky. Nearer, the dark green forest reached to the Thorvand and reflected itself in the placid waters of the lake. Still nearer were the fields. At their feet the pine-tops gently waved.

Hr. Larsen took off his hat, pushed back his hair, and stood in silent contemplation as if he wanted the beauty of the scene to sink deep into his soul. His companion seated herself and looked at him with a quiet smile. Then, after a time, she asked:

“What do you think of it?”

“Think,—yes, think is a good word, but feel is a better one. I feel lifted up, enlarged,—it’s hard to explain, but it’s—it’s—I’ll give it up.”

Atelia laughed merrily. There was a small rustic table in the center of the floor space. Hr. Larsen placed his hat on this table and seated himself opposite the young woman. She was just as beautiful, just as charming, and made him feel just as good as did the farther away prospect of land and water. Think, then,

of the combined effect on the sensitive soul of a young man of this picture of animated youth and beauty with its setting!

"Do you know," said he after a moment of silence and readjustment of his thoughts, "whenever I am in the presence of beautiful scenery I am filled with a feeling of worship, a feeling of prayer. My home in Utah is near the high mountains. When a boy I herded cows up in the canyons, and many a time when I was alone with the silence of the hills about me, I have kneeled in the shelter of some tree or rock and prayed to God. Also later, when I thought I had deep troubles, I would go up in the hills alone to seek consolation."

Atelia's eyes shone with tears as she listened to the young man. She, too, had sought the hills, and many a prayer had been sent to the Author of all this beauty around her, from this very tower-top. When she was younger, the spirit of worship had brooded in her heart in a confused sort of way. She could not then have analyzed her feelings or intelligently told what they were. A daughter of the north she had always been, and the wild sea of the coast, the still waters of the lakes and fjords, the pine-clad hills of her home-land had nourished her soul and helped to make her what she was. But there had been much confusion, also, within her heart, as to the meaning of her emotional life, until one day about a year ago this young man from

America, Hr. Waldemar Larsen, had come to them, and somehow he had brought a "key of knowledge" which had unlocked many mysteries and had explained much that had been dark and perplexing.

"One other thought also comes to me when I see the beauty of this earth which the Lord has created," said the young man.

"Yes, what is that?"

"Why, I think that the beauty without should always find a counterpart within the soul of those who live amid such lovely environment. How can an ugliness within stand the pressure of such beauty without? I like to think that the immensity of the fairness without will in time absorb, as it were, the little meanness within, on the principle of osmotic action, as explained in our text books on science."

"What a fancy! I'll warrant you haven't found your fine theory to work out in fact. Here in Heimstad, for instance—"

"I have found my best verification."

"Hr. Larsen!"

The afternoon waned as they sat there talking. The sun as it neared the horizon made gild and shadow in shifting confusion. The smoke of the steamer on lake Thorvand could be seen behind the hill. The distant low of cattle and the faint tinkle of sheep's bells came to them in their perch above the trees. And yet they lingered.

“Hr. Steen was very much hurt over your action in the boat race, I imagine,” said the young man.

“Yes; I fear he was, but, but I had a purpose in it.”

“A purpose to win the race, of course.”

“Something more, something other than that; but it was foolish of me. I should have kept out and let him win; but,—it was great fun.”

“He couldn’t help talking to me about it. He seemed to think that a victory at the race would have helped him to get the political nomination he is seeking, but I can’t see how it would.”

“Yes; I know how he feels; and, and for that reason I entered the race to beat him.”

“What! why?—but I have no business to ask.”

“Hr. Larsen, I’m going to make a confession”—she stopped, while her face reddened with a confused blush. “Perhaps I ought not; but you’re my friend, and I do want to tell somebody.”

“If I can help you in any way—”

“Yes, you can by not scolding me too much. Listen. When Hr. Steen was here about two weeks ago, we joined a party of picnickers on an outing to ‘Storfossen.’ We went by steamer to Kilo, then by wagon to the falls. You’ve never been there. Well, you should go. Our waterfalls have not the volume of your American ones, but in rugged beauty they are not surpassed. While we were in camp by ‘Storfossen’ a Gypsy fortune teller came to us and wanted to tell

our fortune. Some of us ventured, and there was the usual lot of foolishness. When she took Hr. Steen's hand, she looked at it closely, then she said:

" 'This gentleman has political aspirations.'

"We all laughed at her happy guess, which was not so shrewd, after all, for one with sharp ears who had spent half an hour in our company.

" 'Will he be elected?' asked somebody.

"The old woman paused and muttered something to herself; then she said:

" 'I see a fleet of sailing boats. There is a race. You are in it.'

" 'Well?'

" 'The outcome of the race will determine the outcome of other things,' said the woman as she hobbled away with her fees. We all made merry of the whole thing, but Hr. Steen must have put a private interpretation on her words and thought it meant his political success. However, there are other things than politics that have an 'outcome,' Hr. Larsen."

"Yes; go on."

"Hr. Steen is aiming high in his political career, which of course, is a worthy thing in any man. His heart is very much set on success in that direction, to the exclusion, I fear of other good things. I have tried to get him interested in the gospel as you teach it, but without success as yet. Now, I was foolish enough to also think of the gypsy's prediction;

and as I thought it would be better for Hr. Steen not to win the boat race, I, at the last moment entered, and you know the result."

"I can't quite yet see your point."

"Never mind." She arose, looked out over the darkening landscape. She stood out in profile against the wall of light in the northwest, and her companion thought he had never seen a more entrancing sight.

"The steamer left someone at the landing," she said, and he is now coming up the path. Can you make out who it is?"

"I think it's Hr. Steen," said he.

"Yes, it is; come, let us be going."



“Our Waterfalls, * * * in rugged beauty, are not surpassed.”

CHAPTER IV.

PICNIC AND POLITICS.



COME, Atelia, sit down now," said Captain Heldman. "Hr. Steen has something to say which you ought to hear."

Atelia seated herself at the end of the table around which Hr. Steen, Hr. Larsen, and her father were sitting. She placed her elbows on the table and her chin between her hands. With a roguish smile, she prepared to listen.

They were up in the summer house on the hill-side above Heimstad, where they were eating an afternoon lunch. No Norwegian reception would be complete without something to eat. They were now waiting for Olga, the maid, to bring the dessert.

"Well," said Atelia, "I'm waiting to hear that political speech, Hr. Steen."

But before Hr. Steen could begin, even if he had so intended, Olga arrived. On her tray were four small earthenware bowls filled with clabber milk,—not sour milk, mind you, but clabbered to the right jelly-like consistency. These bowls had been filled with the new milk, then had been placed in the cool, clean milk-cellar, and there left until it had set just right. There was a thick layer of cream on top of each bowl, and Olga had carried them so carefully that not

a wrinkle or crack appeared in the delicious top coat. The girl set her tray on the table, then from a bag she took some crushed toasted biscuit, sprinkled a layer of it over each bowl, then on top of that a little sugar. Now help yourself. "Vaer so god," said Olga. Dip your spoon down carefully at the side and work along the delicacy, being sure that you get a little of the sugar, a little of the powdered biscuit, and a little of the cream with each spoonfull.

If Halvor Steen had wanted to say something especially interesting to Atelia, as her father seemed to think, he had evidently changed his mind, for his bowl of clabber and some haying operations down in the field seemed to occupy his whole attention.

"Hr. Steen here," said the father to Hr. Larsen, "is of the party of the Left and I am a staunch supporter of the Right; so you see, we have some warm arguments."

"Captain Heldman has sailed under the union flag so long" explained Halvor, "that it would be impossible for him to think that we could get along without King Oscar and our union with Sweden."

"The old flag and the old government is good enough for me," replied the Captain, "and I love the old fatherland as well as any of you striplings. I admire the stability of our government, I love the order which prevails, and the honesty which is found in practically every

department. You see, Hr. Larsen, I have been in America, and know somewhat of political conditions over there."

"They are certainly not ideal yet," admitted Hr. Larsen.

"But the foundation for true greatness is there," contended Hr. Steen. "I have recently been studying the American Constitution, and I think it is a wonderful document."

"May I suggest one explanation for its greatness?" asked the Mormon Elder.

"Certainly. What is it?"

Hr. Larsen took a book from his pocket. "This is the Doctrine and Covenants," he explained, "in which are set forth the revelations of the Lord to Joseph Smith. Let me read a passage: 'It is not right that any man should be in bondage one to another. And for this purpose have I established the constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up for this very purpose.' As this plainly teaches, we claim the Lord had a hand in framing the fundamental law of our land. It speaks well for the Norwegian Constitution that it has much in common with the American."

The others listened attentively to this declaration. "I can believe you," said Halvor, "though as 'everything is fair in war and love,' it is generally believed that the Lord has nothing to do with either of these."

"Because a thing is 'generally believed' doesn't

make it true," remarked Atelia, as she finished her bowl.

"We have an ideal country for a republic," continued Halvor. "Our people, inspired by mountain and sea, are liberty-loving. Our children are now getting an education equal to any in the world. The ballot will not be in ignorant hands, and we shall be able to elect our own rulers from the highest in the land to the humblest."

"We're getting the speech, after all," remarked Atelia.

"You, Hr. Larsen, will be interested in this condition of our country: Church and state are yet one with us. This should be changed. Only one of the many religious denominations of our land has a fair chance. The King, the members of his cabinet, judges, school teachers, and many other public officers must belong to the Lutheran church. Thus religion, in many cases, is merely a cloak of policy. Your own religion, Hr. Larsen, is by law placed with the Mohamedan, and you are not lawfully allowed to promulgate it here; the public opinion of a liberty loving people alone makes the law a dead letter. Here's another condition: In our government the executive branch is divided into six departments,—the church, the justice, the interior, public works, finance, war, and the auditing. Now see what a picture this cabinet makes under certain conditions. The head of the finance

department has to do with the raising and adjustment of the revenues. He must, for example, calculate how much whiskey shall be made, and the tax to be collected on it. The head of the church department has to do with the amount and kind of religion there shall be in the land. The same executive body, therefore has to decide on the amount and kind of whiskey and religion which is good for the people of Norway."

"These things should be remedied, of course," admitted the Captain, as he rose to go. "It will do no harm to convert Hr. Larsen as he isn't a voter. When do you leave, Halvor?"

"I shall have to catch this evening's steamer."

"I'm sorry. Remain until tomorrow. You'll not get a more attentive audience than the one you have."

"But appointments, you know, must be filled."

"True. Well, good afternoon."

"Wait a moment, Father; we'll go too."

They all strolled down the path, the father going to the house, the others into the park at the side of the lawn. They reached the water where they found a boat into which they got and rowed out on the lake. The afternoon passed very pleasantly, and ere they were aware, it was boat-time for Hr. Steen.

The three young people went to the pier together. "Which way do you go?" asked Halvor of the missionary.

"In the morning I am going up into Telemarken for a week."

"I wish you success, but those fellows up there are hard to get out of ruts. 'What was good enough for our fathers, is good enough for us' is their argument."

The boat came gliding quietly alongside the pier, Hr. Steen leaped aboard, and goodbyes were waved. Then the two walked slowly back. Twilight deepened over water and woods, and lights appeared in windows. Atelia and her companion went on to the portico of Heimstad and seated themselves in porch chairs. Somehow, both of them found it difficult to speak, for both were occupied with thoughts which they questioned the wisdom of imparting to each other. However, the gospel was always a fitting, and for occasions like this, a safe subject, and so gospel themes occupied their attention until it was time to say good night.

"Did you read the book I left you last?" he asked at the door.

"No; I haven't completed it yet. This racing business has upset me, but I shall finish it right away. Father has read it and is ready for more. Be sure you get some breakfast before you go in the morning. And yes, I nearly forgot,—father wants to talk to you before you leave, so I'll see you again in the morning, and shall now only say good night."

"Good night," said he.

CHAPTER V.

A LITTLE LOVE AND THEOLOGY.



LDER WALDEMAR LARSEN had been in Norway nearly two years. He was a fine looking young man whose mission was doing him a world of good, not only in grounding him in a knowledge of the gospel, but in putting on him a little of the finishing touches of gentlemanliness. He spoke the language well, taking care not to mix it, as he had known others to do, with English. He had met Captain Heldman and his daughter at a friend's home in Christiania. They had invited him to call at Heimstad, which he had gladly accepted, as it lay in his field of labor. He had visited with them a good many times now, and each visit had deepened their friendship.

Long and many were the discussions they had had on gospel themes. Captain Heldman's religious opinions had never been quite orthodox, so it was not so difficult for him to accept the teachings of the young missionary. As for Atelia, naturally of a deeply religious nature, she had eagerly received the truths brought to her. Two years ago she had lost her mother, and since then she had nearly completely withdrawn from society and had lived quietly

at Heimstad with her father who was now too old for much activity.

The morning of Elder Larsen's departure, Atelia herself supervised the getting and serving of breakfast. Afterwards, the Captain and the missionary had a long talk in the library.

"I'm getting along in years," said Captain Heldman, "and I shall not have much longer to live. I believe what you have brought to us is the truth, and I ought to accept it while I have the opportunity. I ought to be baptized. There's nothing like getting a good harbor, you know, at the end of the voyage. When you get back from your Telemarken tour, call this way and I shall be ready."

The Elder was very glad to promise; and all that morning after leaving Heimstad, his heart was light and happy with the prospects of the success which was coming to him. He trudged along the country road. He had refused to take Captain Heldman's offer of a steamer ticket because he wished to visit the farmhouses along the way.

The day was beautiful. The hills were larger, the air was clearer, the farther he went up into the country. The smell of the hills reminded him of his mountain home across the sea. He called at a farm house, stated his errand, and showed his tracts. No, thanks, they did not want either tracts or new preachers. The preachers they had were good enough for them,

and if they wished to read, they had the Bible; besides, the haying was on, and they had time for nothing else.

He tried a number of houses with the same result; but he was not daunted or discouraged; he had become hardened to such experiences. In his teaching and tracting, Elder Larsen tried to have the star of hope ever shining. At every door he would say to himself, "Perhaps here is a soul who is seeking for the truth." It was certainly like sorting over a bushel of chaff to find a kernel of wheat, but the joy which thrilled him when the wheat was found, was worth all the labor it cost.

The next house in view was a mile away up some distance from the main road skirting the lake. The climb up was somewhat steep. The sun was getting warm. He would miss that house; very likely the same treatment awaited him there as he had received at the others. Truth to tell, Waldemar Larsen was not then thinking of the precious kernel which might there be found. His mind slipped as it were, away from the present duty and went back to Heimstad.

They had treated him so well there, had given him substantial meals, a soft clean bed, and with it all a hearty welcome. What a beautiful place was Heimstad! What a fine old man was the Captain! And Atelia! her image persisted with him. She was one in a hundred, yes, in a

thousand; beautiful and charming, good and pure, and now virtually a convert to the gospel; educated and refined, well known among the best society, and to all appearances, heiress to an estate which in Norway was considered a good-sized fortune.

Elder Larsen went on past another house, then he sat down on the grass in the shade of a tree, not to rest, for he was not tired; not to study, for he did not read. His mind, and it is to be feared, a good part of his heart, were at Heimstad. The scenery around him was beautiful, but he did not see it. He lived again, as one is prone to do, in the beautiful past.

He was again with Atelia Heldman in the tower above the waving pinetops, looking into her sweet face, catching new expressions of beauty from form and face and voice. He was with her in the evening gloaming under the pines and in the garden. He was bending over her as she sat by the piano and accompanied his song. He thrilled again with the upward smiles she had given him when he had made a mistake. He felt again the soft, firm grip of the hand whenever she bade him good-night or good-morning.

Why should not Waldemar Larsen have such thoughts? He was an unmarried man.... So was Halvor Steen.

Halvor Steen! yes, he was certainly Atelia Heldman's lover. For a moment a pang of

jealousy persisted in his heart. Should he try to win this beautiful girl,—win her from Halvor Steen?

Down on the shining waters of the lake a man was lazily fishing. He certainly was not making hay. Perhaps he had no hay to make, or more likely, he was shirking—the same as the missionary was doing. Physically, Elder Larsen appeared to be in the line of duty; but mentally, he had gotten sadly out; and the Lord's blessings are vouchsafed only to those who are in the line of duty.

Once more the missionary went on up the road. He walked slowly as though it did not matter much how far he got that day. The houses were now far apart. He tried one about noon, but meeting with failure, he went down to the shore of the lake, where finding a seat on a shelving rock, he took from his grip the dainty lunch which Atelia had insisted he take with him that morning.

Was he entirely free to let his thoughts range as they had been doing? What about that young lady living in his home town, known in that town as his "girl?" They had kept company a little, it is true, but there was nothing binding between them. She was a good intelligent girl, who helped her mother in the housekeeping. She played the organ in meeting. Her sweet face now looked at him through the dream-distance; but beside her stood Atelia Heldman, tall and

straight, a jaunty cap on the thick coils of her dark hair, the clear, beautiful complexion of pink and white contrasting sharply with the rougher skin of the other.

The young man drew a letter from his pocket, opened and read it. It was his latest from this girl in Utah. The letter contained a budget of home news, and between the lines there was that subtle tell-tale something which always creeps in when love dictates the writing. The reader of this letter did not fail to get from it all its meaning, but—but—

Again the missionary went on his way. The next house proved to be a small but neat-looking place, as though it belonged to someone other than a farmer. Perhaps it was the residence of the minister or the school-teacher. Usually, he did not avoid these men, but this afternoon he would have done so. He knocked on the door, and it was opened by an elderly, well-dressed man. Elder Larsen stated his business.

“Come in,” said the man, and he led the way through a hall into what looked like a study. “Take a seat.”

The young man said he had some tracts which he would be pleased to leave. In the course of a few days, he would call for them and leave some more, if they were desired. Waldemar laid his literature on the table, while the man adjusted his glasses and glanced at the leaflets.

“Yes,” said the man, “I have seen them and read them all. They are Mormon tracts.”

“You have read them! and—and what do you think of them?”

“They are very well put together, calculated to deceive the very elect, let alone our simple country folks. It’s a sorry business you are in, my young gentleman, this preaching of heresy to our people. You ought to quit it and go home and attend to your business. You are a farmer, I understand.”

Waldemar Larsen could not understand how this man knew so much about him and his doctrine. The young man began to be unusually ill at ease. His defense was weak. His mind was not quick. He struggled bravely along his usual line of exposition, but the feeling of failure grew upon him. The man listened attentively, nor did he try to refute the doctrines advanced. Then when the young man seemed to have gotten through, the other with a reassuring smile asked:

“My friend, you believe in the Bible, I see.”

“Certainly I do.”

“Good, you believe it just as it is written, I understand that from your own quotations.”

“Yes; we do not believe that there should be any private interpretation put upon the scriptures.”

“Good, again. Now let me call your attention to some scriptural teachings that you have over-

looked. I shall not try to explain to you the true significance of the outward ordinances you have been speaking about and upon which you build your salvation; but I want to call your attention to the vital parts of the gospel of our Savior, the sure foundation of our faith." He opened the Bible on the table, turned over the pages and read:

"'For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life' Do you believe that?"

"Certainly; but— —"

"Wait; perhaps you wish to put a private interpretation on that. Now, I believe that statement just as it stands. If I believe, I shall have everlasting life. There is nothing said here about doing anything for salvation, only to believe." The man was emphatic in his statements as if he spoke from conviction and absolute knowledge.

The young missionary was well acquainted with the passage just quoted, but for the life of him he could not frame a satisfactory answer. The other went on:

"You believe in works. You are passing by what Christ has done for you, counting it as naught, and you are going to work yourself into the Kingdom of Heaven. Listen to what Paul says. Turn to your Bible also so that you may know that I am quoting correctly."

Waldemar did as he was asked. The reading was correct enough.

“‘Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.’

“‘Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.’ Again Paul says in Galatians, ‘Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.’ There it is plain and simple, and yet you Mormons come to us and say that it is by works we are saved. That we must do something. That Christ has not done it all. Do you, sir, ever preach from the texts I have quoted. I dare say never, and therein lies your condemnation.”

The young man sat still, nearly glaring into the face of his tormentor, on whose face the demoniac smile still remained.

“If that is not enough,” continued the man, “turn to Ephesians, second chapter, and that will settle the question for good.” He read:

“‘For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.’”

It seemed to the young missionary that he had never seen these passages before. Perhaps

he never had. And now as they were hurled at him, they pierced him to the quick and seemed to wound his very innermost soul. There was a terrible sinking within him. He tried to rally his fleeing senses, but to no avail. His mind was a dark confusion. And how he suffered! Beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead. (Afterwards, when Waldemar Larsen said he had tasted of hell-fire, he had reference to these few moments in his life.)

After a brief time, when to sit still longer was impossible, the young man mechanically took his hat and turned to the door. The hall seemed to be dark, and he groped his way outside to the light. From the doorway the man of the house bade him good-afternoon and invited him to call again. Waldemar only faintly heard. He quickened his paces, and the breeze striking his face, revived him to a realization of who he was and where he was going.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GRACE OF GOD.



ALDEMAR LARSEN walked on up the road, somewhat dazed for a time. The afternoon sun sank nearer the western hills, and yet its rays, focused between the high mountains, were uncomfortably warm. He left the lake behind, as he climbed the road leading by a river; but he soon reached another but smaller lake in the chain which extended up to the base of the Dovre Mountains. The road skirted this closely. Now and then a stream came dashing from a ravine or small valley into the still water. One of these tempted the young man, and he went up to where some trees cast a shade by the cool, clear water. Here he sat down, this time to rest, for he felt bodily tired.

He bathed his hands and his face, for truth to tell, there had been tears in his eyes. From where he sat not a habitation was in sight, neither was there a sound of human activity. Never before had he been so dejected, so heavy hearted, so alone. From the sadness of his heart and the stillness around him, there came a memory of boyhood days in his native land, when alone in the hills he had lost his cows, and the sun was going down. He remembered

how at one time he had prayed to the Lord that he might find them; and sure enough, in a few moments, old Brindle's bell was heard over a near-by hill; soon he was home with them, and he had received comfort from a discerning, loving mother.—The tears were welling again.

But there could be no such home-going with this young man. He was a long way from home and from anyone to whom he could go for comfort; and now he felt just like a child in need of a parent. In his smaller trials thus far in his missionary life, Waldemar had never failed to get comfort through prayer; but somehow now he lingered in his approach to his Heavenly Father as though he were a prodigal son and not sure of a hearing or a welcome.

The sun dipped down behind the mountain, and the young man realized that he must be moving. He went down again to the lake, found a small landing, and learned from a man living near by that the steamer would be along shortly on its way up to the end of the route. He sat down to wait for it, and when it arrived, he went aboard.

Up through river and slender lakes the steamer wound its way. It was nine o'clock in the evening when they stopped. Most of the passengers were tourists who went to hotels, and would on the morrow take the over-mountain journey to the head of Hardanger fjord, thence by steamer again to Bergen. But Waldemar was

not on a pleasure trip. His business was to reach the people and deliver to them a message. So he struck out again on a road which led him to one of the upper valleys.

For an hour he walked. On the steamer he had rested, so he was not so weary, but he was beginning to feel hungry. Well, a missionary should be at times tired and hungry. There were plenty of hay-lofts in this part, and if it came to that, he could sleep in one of them. However, he would try a house or two first.

He climbed a path leading to a house on the hillside through whose curtained window he could see a light burning. It had a cheery, welcoming look, but who could tell without trying. He went up and knocked. The door was opened by a woman in Telemarken dress who started somewhat at his appearance in her doorway. The elder explained who he was and what he desired.

“Yes, yes, I know,” she exclaimed, “come in. We’ve been waiting for you; we knew you would come.” She took his hat and grip and gave him a chair. Then she called to someone to come from the other room.

“Johan,” she said to a man who evidently was her husband, “this is the man I saw in my dream. He’s an exact likeness. Are you not a preacher, sir?” This to Elder Larsen.

“I am a missionary of the Church of Jesus Christ,” he replied.

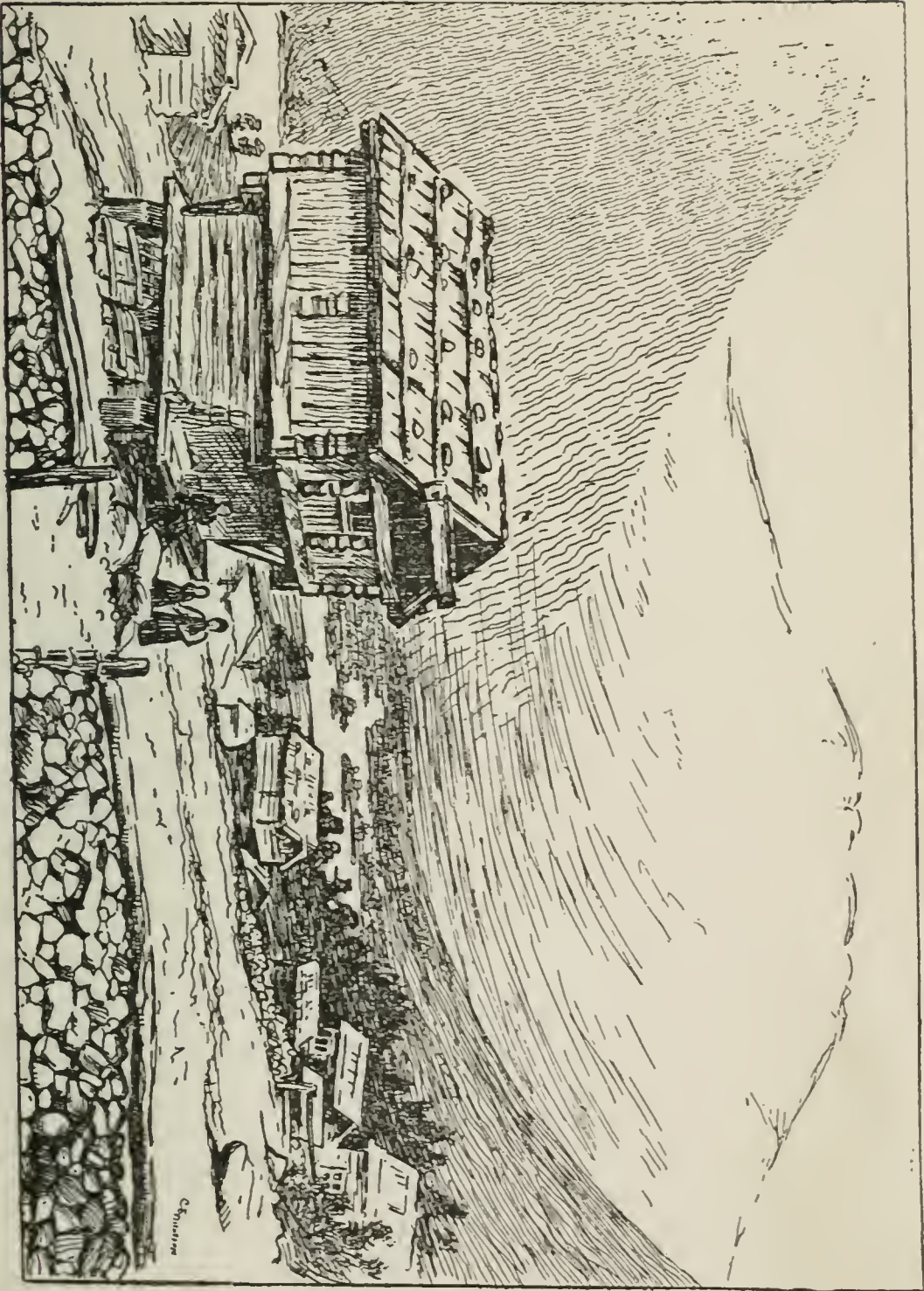
"I knew it, I knew it," she declared with beaming face.

The good woman, seeing the puzzled look on the visitor's face, explained that she and her husband had been for some time seeking for the "true religion." They had read their Bible diligently, and had compared its teachings with the churches with which they could come in contact, but so far they had not been satisfied. In their study and prayer they had also received some manifestations,—dreams of comfort had been given them, and in these dreams a young man, agreeing in appearance to their visitor, had come to their rescue. "Now, thank the Lord, you have come; but you are hungry and tired, and the hour is late. You must have something to eat, then get to bed, and in the morning we shall hear you."

Elder Larsen thanked them, ate heartily of the simple fare set before him, and then willingly retired to the little attic room and to bed. He was tired. His nerves, under high tension for so long, now relaxed, and with a grateful prayer in his heart, he fell asleep.

When Elder Larsen awoke next morning, the sun was shining into the little window. He heard the people going about below. He got up, dressed, and went to the window to see just where he had gotten. A wonderfully grand panorama greeted him: A few rods away stood a "stabur" which reminded him of the

“A few rods away stood a ‘Stabur.’”



one at Heimstad; below, in the bottom of the valley, shone a river. Mountains bounded the scene on two sides, while in the distance, loomed Mt. Gausta, its massive summit streaked with snow.

Elder Larsen said his prayers, then went down stairs where two people and a breakfast were awaiting him. They had eaten, so he would have to eat alone; but they lingered near as if fearful they might lose him. After breakfast, he was invited into a small best room, simple but neat with windows filled with geraniums, fuchsia, and ivy.

“We think you have a message to deliver to us,” said the man. “We shall be pleased to listen.”

And Waldemar delivered his message. Never before had he spoken with such freedom. The Spirit of the Lord shone into his mind and gave it understanding. He began with the principles of the gospel, and explained faith, repentance, and baptism of water and of the spirit; and as he talked, Johan Bonden and his wife exchanged glances of endorsement. Then the missionary told of the restoration of the gospel by an angel, of the need of such a restoration, and of the establishment of the Church after the primitive pattern. He talked for a long time, and the two sat and drank in every word as if they had been famishing for the word of God, which in truth they had.

“Many thanks,” said the man when Elder Larsen stopped. “This is just what we have been looking for. We believe every word of what you have been saying. Wife and I have been reading all about these very things in the Bible. Yes, we even found that prediction in Revelations where it states an angel should bring the gospel to earth again; but of course, we never dreamed that it had been fulfilled, and now —” and so the questions began.

All that day Waldemar remained with them. The man neglected his usual labors, the woman did nothing but prepare the meals and tidy up her already tidy rooms. In the afternoon, Elder Larsen and Hr. Bonden looked about the place, going farther up on the hill to get a better view of the valley. The farmer showed Waldemar his cows, his one horse, and his few acres of tillable land. Then for a time America, the Land of Opportunity, was the theme, and the Norwegian farmer was told of its broad fields, its vast herds of cattle, its bands of horses. Then the housewife beckoned them to come to the house to get something more to eat, this time delicious chocolate and cake.

That evening the lamp was lighted again early for they might wish to read.

“I have had great joy in bringing you the gospel,” said Elder Larsen, “but what about these neighbors of yours. Wouldn’t they also like to hear me?”

“Well, that we cannot say; we have talked to all of them on the very things you have told us, and they will have nothing to do with the doctrines. They believe implicitly what the priest tells them, and the priest has warned them to keep away from wife and me; but you might try,—they might listen to you.”

“I shall give them a chance anyway; and then the Lord, of course, will have to take care of the rest. When we do what we can, He will add what is lacking.”

“That’s just what I tell the people,” added Hr. Bonden; “but as you very well know, they have been so grounded in this doctrine of being saved by faith alone that they think it is a sin to do anything for their salvation. It’s preposterous, of course, and against all sense and reason. Doesn’t the Lord work on natural principles? Do we ever get anything in this life without working for it?”

“And this world is just as much the Lord’s as any other.”

“True; some people believe that the Lord’s province lies exclusively beyond the grave, and that He has nothing to do with the natural laws which operate here. The grace of God which saves might be likened to the life-giving rays of the sun, which, together with the soil and the moisture, all God-given, of course, provide us all there is on earth; but not unconditionally: man must put forth his hand and

Take these blessings. He must intelligently place himself in harmony with the laws which govern earthly growth in order to reap a harvest; so likewise must he do in the case of heavenly law."

"That is," said the missionary, "'Not every one that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.'"

"St. John seemed to think that belief alone would not do," said Hr. Bonden, as he turned the pages of his Bible and read: "'If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'"

"And this," added the wife, "in the last chapter of the Bible: 'Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city.'"

"As St. James so forcibly says faith without works is dead. Then it logically follows that the faith which the scriptures speak of as being a saving power must be of the kind that is made alive by works. I had a conversation with a gentleman yesterday," continued Elder Larsen, as he thought of his sad experiences of the day before, "who quoted strongly from the scriptures that man is not justified by the works of the law. Do you recall those passages?" Truth to tell, the Elder was still somewhat at sea with the "works of the law."

“Oh, yes; I know them. Men are either ignorant or dishonest when they use those passages to prove that works are unnecessary. I was puzzled at first, for there seemed to be a contradiction; but I read before and after these particular quotations, whole chapters, in fact, to find out just what Paul was speaking about; and this I found: The ancient saints were loath to give up the law of Moses as a means of salvation. The law of Moses was one largely of works. Ancient Israel had to do a great many things to keep them in remembrance of the Lord. The ceremonial works of the law—of Moses, mind you—were so grounded in that it was difficult to get rid of them, and so Paul grows emphatic when he writes for instance to the Romans that ‘a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law,’ and the same expression in Galatians and other places. Surely, the ‘deeds of the law’ could not mean the law of the gospel, but the law of Moses, and especially, as the reading points out, the law of circumcision.”

Elder Larsen followed the man’s exposition carefully. A flood of light came to him. Clearly, here was the explanation of these puzzling quotations which had been hurled at him the day before. Just then he felt that some day he would accept his tormentor’s invitation to call again.

The next morning, the missionary went on his way up the valley; but not before he had

promised to call again on his way back. After leaving his newly found friends—in very deed, kernels of wheat in the chaff—he met the usual experiences of indifference.

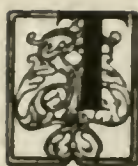
One morning early towards the end of the week, a messenger overtook Elder Larsen, and after satisfying himself of his identity, handed him a telegram. It read:

“Please come to Heimstad as soon as possible. Father is very ill.—Atelia.”

Heimstad! In the stress and the joy of spirit which the missionary had experienced the last few days, Heimstad had nearly gone from his thoughts. But he was wanted, and needed. He turned back on his road, had just time to call at the Bonden house to explain and promise, and then to catch the steamer down the lakes.

CHAPTER VII.

AN OVERBURDENED MIND.



THE clouds hung heavy over Thorvand, over the hills, over Heimstad. The rain fell steadily, gently. It dripped from the eaves and from the trees and washed the grass free from dust.

It was late morning, yet a hush hung over Heimstad as if the inhabitants were loathe to get up on such a dreary morning. The cows were yet in their stalls in the barn, and the sheeps' bells clanged impatiently at the door of the sheep-fold.

The front door opened and Atelia Heldman stepped out on the front porch. She looked up to the sky, then around as if surprised at the absence of life. "Olga has overslept," she said. She went back into the house and rapped gently on Olga's door.

"Yes, I'm coming"—from within.

"It's late, Olga. I should not have kept you up so long last night."

In a very short time the girl was dressed, though not in a very good humor with herself for sleeping so long. A fire was soon made, the cows were milked and let into the pasture, and the sheep were released.

"Now then, Froken Heldman, what shall you have for breakfast?" asked rosy-cheeked Olga, as she came in with her full milk pails.

"Nothing at all, thank you, Olga."

"But that will never do. You look worn out already. Did you sleep at all, last night?"

"Not much, I fear. Do you think the rain has ceased for good? I see the clouds are breaking in the west."

"That's a good sign; but here, drink a cup of coffee at least."

"You dear girl, have you forgotten that I have quit drinking coffee."

"Yes; but this morning—"

"Just give me a cup of that warm broth, please.—There, that's very good, better, at least better for us than coffee."

Olga demurred goodnaturedly at this. She had no very high opinion of this new American missionary's teachings, the latest being that coffee was not good for one. "Huh," Uncle Sande had said, "take away coffee from the Norwegian people, and you take away their chief material support and joy."

"Some peoples' support ought to be taken away," Atelia had said at the time.

"Shall I make a little fire in your room?" asked Olga.

"No, thank you. I am going out. If Hr. Steen or Hr. Larsen should come while I am

away, make them comfortable until I come back, will you?"

In a short time the sky appeared in large, blue patches; the breeze dried the trees and grass, and everything was fresh and sweet. Atelia walked down the path to the boat house. Her long braids of hair hung down her back; a shawl rested loosely over her shoulders.

Unfastening a small row boat, she adjusted the oars, stepped lightly in and pushed from the shore. Grace was in every movement as the light craft glided over the water. She made for a rocky headland around which proved to be a tiny rock-bound, tree-shaded harbor, across which Atelia let her boat idly drift. The oars dragged in an untidy fashion from their locks; the hands which had held them were folded; the girl's head was bowed; and thus in its solitude and beauty this picture and its central figure were in perfect harmony: was not this a scene from a "Norsk Saga?" had this fair girl's lover been slain in some Viking raid, and was she in this inner, protected sanctuary, away from the strife and uproar of outer fjord and sea, sorrowing over her lonely lot?

With a little guiding push with an oar, the boat lay up to a stone landing. Atelia stepped out, fastened her boat, and walked up a path leading into the woods. In a few moments she came to a clearing where stood a house. The front door was open, and as the girl stepped

up to it she was welcomed by a middle-aged woman who was preparing the morning meal.

“Good morning, Froken,” said the woman, “come right in. You are out early this morning.”

“Yes; I had to move to keep from giving up altogether.

“Did you row?”

“Yes; and the lake is lovely beyond words this morning;—but I wish you would not call me Froken, for I shall call you Sister Nordo after this.”

“Have you been baptized?”

“No, not yet; but I’m one with you,—and— you are about the only friends, you and Helga, I have left. Where is Helga?”

“She will be in directly. You’ll sit up with us and have some breakfast? You really look hungry.”

“Well, I’m not, Sister Nordo,” said Atelia with a faint smile.

Helga now came in. She was a rosy-faced picture of health and strength. She coaxed the visitor to sit up with them and sip a glass of new milk, the finest tonic in the world, said Sister Nordo. After the meal, the table was soon cleared of dishes and a vase of flowers was placed in the center. Sister Nordo drew up her chair and asked:

“Now, what can we do for you?”

“I—I hardly know; but I feel so bad about father.” The tears now came to her eyes, and

in a short time she was sobbing. The mother stepped around to the girl and placed her arm about her shoulder. Tears of sympathy stood in Helga's eyes also, and there was a stillness in the room, broken only by Atelia's weeping. With motherly caresses the woman quieted the girl, who at last, with an effort said:

"I have been thinking of father. His last sickness came on him so suddenly that he did not have time to do what he wanted. I was with him continually during his last days, and he talked rationally with me. Yes, he spoke of you folks, and had it in mind to do something more for you. Then he had his clothes ready for baptism.... He told Elder Larsen that he would be ready on his return. He even had me go down to the lake and find a suitable place. 'I'll be well again in a day or so,' he said, 'and Elder Larsen will be here, then we'll be baptized, both of us. You believe as well as I, then why shouldn't we both go together?' and I told him I would go with him, and O, Sister Nordo, he was so glad of that!....

"I sent for Uncle Sande, and you may imagine he did not like to hear father talk of being baptized by a Mormon Elder. Uncle Sande told him that if he wished to receive the grace of God he must cease such talk. That was towards the last, and poor father did not understand him, which was a blessing.... The end came so suddenly. We had also sent for Elder Larsen,

but he came an hour after father's death....

“And now he's gone, and he wasn't baptized. What will become of him? ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned’ is ringing in my ears. Also ‘Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ Father, then, has not gone to the heaven of the just, and yet he was a good man. Yes, Sister Nordo, and so was my mother a good woman; yet neither of them ever received of the ordinance of baptism as we believe it to be necessary. What has become of them?”

The girl's question ended in a wail of despair, and she broke down again, resting her arms on the table, face in hands. Helga now came to her, stroked her head, and tried to console her. Helga, the daughter of poor working people and Atelia, the Mistress of Heimstad had lately become close friends, for something had entered both their lives which had leveled all barriers of wealth or position or learning between them.

“Uncle Sande would have driven Elder Larsen from the house had he dared. But I asked him in Uncle's hearing to stay until after the funeral. Hr. Steen came of course, but he is so busy with political matters just now that he could not remain long. And here I am. I don't want to go back to Heimstad. I would like to stay

with you two people all the time. You are such a comfort to me."

"You shall stay as long as you desire, my dear girl," said the mother.

"Yesterday I went to the graveyard, and when I saw father's and mother's graves side by side, I knew I was alone in the world.... You will forgive me, won't you; for coming to you with my burdens of woe; but I felt this morning that I had to come here."

"You did just right."

"Thank you. Now Sister Nordo, what was that Elder Larsen told us the last time we had a little meeting here. It was about baptism for the dead. Hr. Steen, you remember, was here, and I now confess my sins to you that I was not listening as I should." A faint blush overspread the girl's face as she admitted this.

The mother, noticing the tired expression in the girl's face, asked Helga to bring a pillow, which she arranged on a sofa near the window. Then she took Atelia's hand and led her to the couch. "Here," she ordered, "lie down for a while. I will sit here and tell you what I know about baptism for the dead, though it is but little."

Atelia did as she was told, and the mother explained the best she could. The mother-heart went out to this girl who had come to her for comfort. In her simple, untutored language, the woman talked to Atelia, telling her of the good-

ness of God which had been revealed to them in the restored gospel, and of its saving principles both for the living and the dead. The girl lay at first with wide-open eyes and looked at the speaker. Then, as the mind became somewhat rid of its burden, the face lost its careworn expression, and a faint smile came to the lips. Presently, Atelia closed her eyes, and when she did not say "Go on" any more, when Sister Nordo ceased speaking, they knew she was asleep. Then they carefully tucked a cover about her, drew down the blind, and left her in quiet to rest.

CHAPTER VIII.

ATELIA'S TEMPTATION.



IT was past noon when Atelia awoke. She was feeling much better, and she gladly partook of the dainty lunch which Helga prepared and set before her. As she ate, she told Sister Nordo and Helga that she had dreamed a most comforting dream wherein her father had appeared to her and assured her that all was well with him, and that she was to have a talk with Elder Larsen on the subject of baptism for the dead.

“And now I am ever so much obliged for your kindness,” she said as she prepared to take her departure. “I’ll remember it always.”

“But you’ll come again; come often; it’s little we have for such as you, but you know,—”

“Tut, tut,” interrupted Atelia. “I’m coming again; I’ve many things to talk to you about. I’m going to walk back, if Helga will take care of my boat. I want to smell the woods after the rain.”

They urged her to remain, but she explained that Uncle Sande would be waiting to talk over some business pertaining to her father’s affairs.

Helga walked with Atelia some distance into the woods. The sky was now clear, the air was

cool after the rain. Atelia led her friend to talk of her cousins in America, and how they were faring in their new home. Then she dismissed her by saying: "Thank you, Helga; now you must go back."

Atelia went on alone under the trees, over the sloping hill-sides and down towards Heimstad; and as she swung along her spirits came back. She breathed deeply. Life was worth living, after all; she yet had the gospel and,—Halvor Steen; what more could any girl ask?

Yes, the gospel was getting to be very dear to her. She had always, as far back as she could remember, taken a deep interest in religious subjects, although her love for out-door sport had made some people think to the contrary. She had always been faithful, in her young girlhood days, in going to the priest to learn her catechism. The eventful day of her confirmation she remembered well, for that ceremony was looked upon by the young people as the culminating point in their religious life, and they likened it somewhat to the Roman youth putting on his toga or the English high born being presented at Court.

However, that afternoon as she walked under the trees, her mind was on more recent events, especially on the coming of Elder Larsen and his religion into their lives. Uncle Sande was assistant to the parish priest, and he had never had patience with her father or her when they asked

him questions on religious subjects. He openly opposed the visits of Elder Larsen, and said some very bad things of him and his religion, which Atelia could not believe. In fact, if fruit may be judged by its appearance, by its taste, and by the effect it has on the person who partakes of it, then this so-called Mormonism, tried by the same standards, must be among the finest religions in the world. But Uncle Sande had shrugged his shoulders at this argument when Atelia had used it, and Hr. Steen, who heard it, smiled at the way she had silenced her uncle.

The sun was an hour or so above the horizon when she reached the tower. She climbed up to the top and sat down to rest. The view was just as fine that afternoon as ever, but she heeded it not, for her mind was busy. When would Halvor call again? He might find time from his electioneering to spend a little time with her. He might know she was lonesome. She had also written to Elder Larsen to call, and she hoped he would not be long, for she now had some questions of vital importance to ask him.

And now, as Atelia Heldman sat in the tower above the tree tops, the tempter came to her, as we read he came to the Master, to show the soul on whom he had designs, the glories of the world. As she looked over Thorvand, a passing steamer drew her attention and

furnished occasion for the tempter to whisper to her: How often have you traveled on that same boat to Skien, then on to Christiania! In the capital, you have a host of friends, people of note, of wealth, and power. Now, if you become a Mormon, what then? Will you still be received as a welcome guest into the best families? Will you? Will you not drop completely out of sight the moment people know you are a Mormon? Such common folks as Sister Nordo and Helga will be your only associates. Will it be worth while to sacrifice yourself thus, at the opening of a promising career? Then there is Halvor Steen!....

Halvor Steen doesn't want a Mormon wife; that would be too much to ask of him and his proud mother. And yet you want Halvor, you know you do, for you love him. You have loved him for a long time now, and you are eagerly, tremblingly awaiting for him to ask you to be his wife. Will he ever do that if you join the despised Mormons? Will he? Will he not rather seek for a wife among the fair daughters of the north who are content with Norway, religion and all? Will he not?....

The steamer on the lake disappeared, and its smoke blended with the haze in the distance. Atelia sat motionless as if some power held her; and still the tempter kept on: And there is Heimstad, beautiful Heimstad, the home of your ancestors. You cannot leave that. Ere long

the green will be tinged with yellow and brown. Then the winter will freeze the lake and cover the land with a deep, soft mantle of snow over which you will glide on your long snow-shoes. You are in love with Heimstad, and no wonder. So is Halvor Steen, for that declaration has already come. Heimstad will be a charming country seat for you and Halvor. A home in Christiania and one here! Can any condition be more ideal?....

The sun rested for a moment on the western hills, then sank out of sight. A chill crept over the earth, and reached the heart of the maiden in the tower. She shivered, and drew her shawl close, crouching into the seat. The earth was losing its life and beauty. The tempter had not shown her joy and peace of heart and soul. He had tried to show her the glory of the world, but with it there was an emptiness, an utter void of darkness and despair. She struggled as with an unseen power. Darkness came on before its time; the tower seemed to sway to and fro as if it would fall, but she was not afraid of that; some fear, more dreadful than that of death, crept into her heart; despair, utter and indescribable despair rolled over her in great floods; would her soul be utterly crushed?....

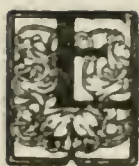
She had strength enough and presence of mind enough to form a prayer, silent, but from her heart. She prayed for deliverance, for light in the darkness, for power to throw off the evil

which seemed to be taking her life. As she prayed, she gained more power to pray; and presently she found relief. Light came back, and joy. She could move her limbs again, and she stood upon her feet. There was a beautiful twilight in the sky, and the breeze cooled her face. One more prayer she uttered standing, a prayer of thanksgiving. Then she walked carefully down the steps to the ground. By the time she had reached the house, she was herself again.

As she stepped on the porch, she saw Elder Larsen standing near the door with hat and grip in hand as if about to depart. Olga and Uncle Sande were to be seen in the hall, through the open door, in animated conversation.

CHAPTER IX.

NORSEMAN BLOOD.



ELDER WALDEMAR LARSEN had walked the long road from Skien to Heimstad. The truth of the matter was that he could not afford the steam-boat fare. He had received no money from home for some months, so he was, for the time being, "broke." However, at the receipt of Atelia's letter requesting him to come to Heimstad, he had set out immediately. He had good road-legs, and his appetite for the plain country fare increased as he advanced.

As Atelia's letter was urgent, he regretted that he could not have taken the quicker means of reaching her. At one place on the road Waldemar was surprised by having a farmer ask him to ride in his wagon. Seated on the rough cart, Elder Larsen entertained the farmer by an account of America, always a fruitful theme. The farmer thought this American ought to know his brother-in-law in Minnesota and his son in Chicago. This ride was Waldemar's first and last "lift" that any citizen of the north ever offered him.

The sun was low when Heimstad came into view. The traveler was tired and hungry, but he knew he would be well treated at the large, white house on the hillside. He strode boldly up the path and went around to the side, and met Olga in the yard. She told him that Froken Heldman was away—had been away nearly all day, but she would no doubt be back soon. He, however, was to go right in and make himself at home.

Waldemar went into the kitchen, and placing his umbrella, hat, and grip on the bench, he sat down to rest by the old-fashioned combination grate and cook stove. He was always interested in what was going on around these stoves, and this evening the savory smells added to its charms. The young man was speculating on how he would build just such a fireplace when he came to the erection of his own home away over in Utah, when an inner door opened and a gentleman appeared. It was evidently a surprise to this man to see Elder Larsen making himself at home by the kitchen fire, but it was just as much a surprise to Waldemar to see in this man the gentleman who had so worsted him in a theological discussion up in Telemarken.

“What is your errand here, sir?” asked the man sharply.

Waldemar was tempted to answer the man in the same tone, but he checked the desire and explained that he wished to see Froken Heldman.

"Froken Heldman is not at home; besides she has no business with a Mormon preacher. I advise you to travel on; we do not entertain strangers here."

"I am not a stranger here. I am here by special invitation of Froken Heldman. I ought to see her before I go."

"I am in charge here now, and I do not want the presence of such as you. I advise you to be gone."

Waldemar picked up his things, and was moving toward the door when Olga entered.

"You are not going?" she asked.

"Yes, Olga, he is going," answered the gentleman. "Do not detain him."

"But sir, Froken Atelia told me that if Hr. Larsen should come, he was to be entertained until she returned."

"I tell you we do not want any Mormon priests here. Stand out of his way, Olga."

Elder Larsen stepped out on the porch where he paused for a moment. It was getting dark, and he wondered what he should do next. Where could he go for the night? He was always welcome at Sister Nordo's. He would have to go there, and perhaps next day get some explanation of the state of affairs. Just then Atelia herself came down the path and recognized him at once.

"Good evening, Elder Larsen," she said. "I

am so glad you came. Have you just arrived? Come right in."

Waldemar did not heed her invitation. He stood still looking at the girl in the twilight, attracted by the strange expression in her face.

"Perhaps I ought not go in," he said.

"Why? what is the matter?"

"Well, I have just been told that I am not wanted here, and in short, that I was to be off."

"Elder Larsen! Who said that?"

"A man in the house,—the one who is talking to Olga."

"Uncle Sande?"

"Is that your Uncle Sande? Then I understand."

"But I do not. Come in, and we'll get an explanation."

"Wait a moment. You see, your uncle hates me, hates my religion. I do not want to quarrel with him."

"But Elder Larsen, I don't hate you or your religion. I want to talk with you. What has Uncle Sande got to do with my affairs?"

"Very much, it seems; he told me he was in charge here."

The blood quickened in the girl's veins and burned in her cheeks. "Will you come with me?" she asked.

Waldemar followed her into the house. Olga was busy in the kitchen, Uncle Sande was

sitting by a desk in the dining room, examining some papers, when the two entered. Atelia gave the elder a chair.

"Uncle Sande," she asked, "why did you treat Elder Larsen like a tramp?"

The man turned leisurely to the table on which he spread his documents. "Because that's just what he is, no more, no less; and I cannot understand, Atelia, why you should associate with such people."

The color deepened in the girl's face as she stood erect, indignant. "Uncle Sande, such people were good enough for father, and what was good enough for him, I am not ashamed of."

"Your father was old and feeble minded," was the reply; "he was not always responsible for what he did. But you, you ought to have better sense than to be deluded by Mormon preachers, you who were brought up under Christian influences."

"I'm not going to argue the question with you, Uncle. All I ask is that you treat a person who comes to my home on my special request, as a gentleman."

Uncle Sande did not answer; he turned over his papers.

There came a pause. Elder Larsen thought he ought to say something, and this was the best he could do: "Perhaps I ought not to stay, Froken Heldman. I do not wish to be

a disturber. I'll take the next steamer back to Skein."

Atelia turned on him. She was thoroughly aroused, and her eyes blazed. "You may do as you please," she said. "I am mistress here. I asked you to call. You are my guest. If you do not wish to remain, I have no more to say."

Waldemar was slow in answering. Uncle Sande arose and said:

"Atelia, this nonsense may as well stop now. You speak with confidence about this being your home. Do not be so sure of that. As far as ownership goes, until your father's affairs are settled, you know nothing about it. Meanwhile, I am in charge here, and you should let me be the judge in such matters as making Heimstad headquarters for Mormon missionaries."

"Uncle, you are not my master. Just now this is my home, my castle, if you please, even if it should prove later that not a stone or piece of timber in it is mine. I am mistress here, and you, Uncle, will please not interfere in my personal matters. That's all for this evening."

She took Elder Larsen's hat, which he still held in his hand, picked up his umbrella, and carried them into the hall. From the kitchen door she told Olga to bring in the supper. Then she busied herself with setting the table. Uncle Sande passed out.

They were soon sitting at the table. She

asked him to say the blessing, then she helped him to a liberal supply of food.

"You must be hungry," she said; "and it's a shame to have kept you waiting so long. . . . Yes, I'll eat also, for I'm hungry now. Getting over an angry spell always gives me an appetite," she laughed. "You must forgive me for speaking so sharply to you. I was annoyed by your remarks about letting Uncle Sande scare you away. Oh, I know him, and how to treat him. He'll not bother any more this evening."

Elder Larsen was content with the outcome, for he was hungry and tired. Atelia was already looking better. She inquired about the coming conference in Christiania, about the newly arrived missionaries, and Waldemar was pleased to inform her. Then when the table was cleared, Olga was told to leave the dishes for a while, bring her crochet-work, and sit with them. Elder Larsen's talk would do her good; besides, Atelia had other reasons for desiring her presence.

Atelia explained how she had worried about her father, how she had gone to Sister Nordo's, and what she had learned there. "But I was to have you give a further explanation of these things, I was told in my dream, and here you are." She said very little about her terrible experience of the afternoon with the tempter.

The young elder was glad to teach this young woman, and also the other girl who was listening

attentively over her work. What missionary is not? The world is so cold and so indifferent, that when someone is eager to receive, he is just as eager to give. Teaching the gospel to receptive minds is the keenest joy of missionary life, and the missionary will make many sacrifices to get the privilege. So that evening, the Lord blessed the Elder's words and they went joy-laden and full of comfort to receptive hearts.

"The beauty of the gospel," said Elder Larsen, "is its comprehensiveness. It is as high as the heavens, as wide as eternity; it encompasses all things; it provides for all conditions; the All-wise Merciful Father who is the Author of the gospel, stretches out his loving arms to the uttermost bounds of time and space. This life is but a brief space of time, a bit of the infinite in terms of the finite. The Lord is wise in thus dividing infinity into sections, as it were, so that we might grasp a little of life's meaning. We are eternal beings: we came from somewhere, we are going somewhere; and God is over it all."

Olga's needle moved slowly through the thread.

"The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The power of God is not limited to this life. Always and everywhere when there is a soul to save, and that soul is in a condition to be saved, the gospel is at hand, for it is an everlasting gospel. When the love of God fails, then, but

not till then, the gospel will fail. Let us get that fixed in our minds."

"Is it not beautiful!" said Atelia softly, as with shining eyes she leaned forward to catch every word.

"Your father was a good man. He understood the gospel very well; he believed in its principles, but he was hindered from yielding obedience to its ordinances. Your mother no doubt, was a good, true woman, though she never heard the gospel preached in its purity. Yes, there are thousands of good men and women, sons and daughters of God who have gone into the great spirit world without a knowledge of the pure gospel of the Redeemer. Are they lost? Does God's mercy end at the grave? Oh, no. Hand me your Bible.....

"I read here in First Peter, third chapter: 'Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit; by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, which sometimes were disobedient in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing!'

"You remember that in our talk about the thief on the cross, I referred to this passage, and explained that Christ, after his death, went and preached to those in the spirit world. Certainly, He preached the gospel. Baptism is a part of

the gospel, as well as faith and repentance; but how can the dead be baptized?"

"That's what I should like to know," said Olga, whose needle had nearly stopped.

"Here is a passage which may help us out: 'Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?'"

"Can we be baptized for those who are dead?" asked Atelia.

"According to the scriptures and modern revelation, we can."

"Then I am ready to be baptized for father and mother tomorrow."

Elder Larsen smiled at her eagerness, and explained further to her that this ordinance is performed in the Temples erected for that purpose; also that men are baptized for men and women for women. "Besides," said he, "you remember you are not yourself baptized."

"Yes; I suppose that is the proper order; and I shall need a man to help me in my work for the dead?"

"Yes, you will certainly need a man to help you. 'Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.'"

Thus the evening passed, and before they were aware, it was time to separate. "Olga," said Atelia, "will you see that Elder Larsen's room

is ready; and Olga, if you don't mind, I wish you would stay with me tonight. I—I am a bit nervous."


Waldemar arose to go, and Atelia followed him to the door to say goodnight. "Tomorrow," she said, "may I be baptized? I have found a beautiful spot near Nordo's, and Sister Nordo and Helga have promised to come. What do you think about it?"

"Just as you say; if you are ready."

"Then tomorrow. Goodnight."

CHAPTER X.

THE MORMON MARRIAGE SYSTEM.

HE town of Strand where Halvor Steen lived contained a few Latter-day Saints. When Elder Larsen visited them, he made it a point to call on Halvor who was always glad to see him. Frue Steen treated him with cold civility, so his stay was not at any time long.

This afternoon, as Waldemar knocked on the door of the Steen residence, Halvor himself opened it wide, and with a cheery welcome, bade him come in.

"I was just passing through Strand today," explained the visitor, "and I dared not disregard your standing order to call."

"That's right. Come right in to the fire; it's cold today. How are you, anyway. I haven't seen you for some time."

Seated cosily within, the two men settled themselves for a pleasant chat. Halvor was one of those rare exceptions, a non-smoker, which fact added much to the missionary's comfort.

"Well, I suppose you have heard that I failed to get the nomination I was after," began Halvor.

"No; I had not heard."

"Yes, I lost out on the last ballot. Up to

then, I had a chance; but friend Transen, my opponent, beat me. So it's all off for this time, and I am now devoting myself to my business, which has been sadly neglected."

"Have you been to Heimstad lately?"

"Not for some time. I have been very busy."

"Yes; but don't stay away too long. You perhaps know that Captain Heldman left his affairs in a somewhat poor condition."

"Yes, I heard that."

"Atelia's Uncle Sande has control up at Heimstad, and it is my opinion that she will fare poorly at his hands. He claims to have bought from Captain Heldman the whole estate, and Atelia is in danger of being turned out of house and home."

"Is it that bad? Poor girl; I'll run up tomorrow; thank you, Larsen, for telling me."

"That's right; she will be glad to see you."

"I don't know about that; but of course she will want to tell me, 'I told you so.'"

"I don't understand."

"Well, let me explain," said Halvor good-naturedly. "You saw the boat race this summer and how I was so beautifully beaten. I thought Atelia was out of it, so that left me a fair chance to come out first; and just then, I did want to win. You know, Larsen, we Norwegians have not yet quite gotten out from under the influence of superstition. Our forefathers saw gods and demons and sprites and trollds in every

wind and weather, and the supernatural is in the blood yet. Well, one day while a party of us was having an outing, and old fortune-telling gypsy told me that my political success depended on my winning a boat race, or at least, that was the interpretation I placed upon the hag's words; and Atelia, who heard, took it the same way. Now, for some reason which I cannot fathom, she did not wish me to be successful in my political career; so what did she do but get out her racing 'Blue Bird' and,—you know the rest. What do you think of that? Why should Atelia want me beaten?"

Elder Larsen could truthfully say he did not know, but he suggested that Atelia Heldman was incapable of wishing anybody harm, and especially Hr. Steen.

"I hope—I know you are right; but, Larsen, believe me, these women are deep. You must have a strenuous time at your home in Utah with your six wives, eh!"

"You're rather jolly for a defeated candidate."

"Oh, it hurt for a time; but I claim to be somewhat of a philosopher. By the way, that book you let me take,—I dipped into it again last evening, and I have forty questions to ask you. I'm not detaining you too long?"

"Not at all. I'll be glad to talk over with you any points you wish."

"Even on the Mormon marriage system?"

"Certainly—even on the Mormon marriage

system," answered Elder Larsen with some emphasis.

"I hope you will pardon me. I don't want to appear rude."

"You are not rude. Your interest in the marriage question is perfectly natural and right. A man of your age and endowments should be thinking of marriage; and with such a person as Froken Heldman in the foreground of your thoughts,—well, you are to be congratulated."

"Thank you; she is a sweet girl,—too good for me, I fear."

"If that be true, make yourself worthy of her."

"I am going to try. Now, let me ask you about this marriage for eternity. It's a new idea to me, for as you know, we have been taught to look upon marriage as a state or condition applicable to this life only."

"I know; and without criticising others beliefs, let me try to make plain our teachings on that subject. To me this doctrine is one of the most beautiful imaginable. Some day I hope to love a girl so much that I will want her to be with me and be my companion and wife as long as I live and have a being."

"As long as you live?"

"And I shall live forever. I shall still live when this mortality is laid aside for a time. I shall live in the spirit world, and then after that, in the resurrected, celestial form. Now then, friend Steen, think with me of a love that begins,

we shall say here—though I sometimes think that the beginning of all true love antedates even mortality—then as it continues and grows through the years, becoming stronger through sacrifice, more beautiful and more divine as the years of toil and struggle pass over our whitening heads, think with me, my friend, of such a love, and tell me when you would want it to cease?”

“Never, never.”

“Is it not good to think—is it not reasonable to think, that the most beautiful thing in the world, the love between husband, wife and children is like truth itself, eternal in its nature, and will endure forever. If we are eternal beings, and all Christians admit that, what will we take with us into the new world but the sum-total of our thoughts and feelings from the old? and what thoughts and feelings enter more into a good man’s life than those associated with the family?”

“Just a moment until I catch up with you.... Yes, I suppose you are right; but according to that line of argument, if a man’s life has been full of evil thoughts and feelings, this evil will continue with him hereafter.”

“Naturally; until he changes and exercises himself in the good. Man is what he is at any point of his existence.—But coming back to the question of marriage and its duration, let me call your attention to the fact that when mother Eve was given to father Adam there was no

such limiting expression used by the Lord as 'until death do you part.' There was then no death, therefore it was not taken into consideration. That is the way, it seems, that the Lord performs marriages. 'I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever,' says the Preacher of the old Bible; and even our modern ministers admonish us not to put assunder that which God has bound in one—but I do not wish to enter into a Biblical discussion of the subject. Any more questions?"

"You have answered a number already, and I can have no objections to what you say. Now, tell me, should our ministers marry people for 'time and eternity' as you call it?"

"In the first place, they will not because they do not believe in it; and in the second place, they have not the power. This power exists only in the true Church, the Church which preaches the doctrine and has the power of the priesthood to officiate in the name of the Lord."

"Therefore the necessity of all men and women who contemplate marriage becoming members of that Church," added Halvor Steen.

"You have placed the proposition exactly, if bluntly; but, don't think us arbitrary or bigoted. We only wish to be consistent,—and right. Every blessing, little or big, is obtained by the observance of the law upon which it is predicated. If this doctrine of marriage, for instance, does not appeal to you, why—"

“But it does appeal to me, Larsen. I don’t quite understand it yet, but I have applied the test you told me the last time we had a talk, and it ‘tastes good’ Larsen, tell me, have you ever talked like this to Atelia?”

“Oh, no; not on this subject.”

“One more question. What about this plural marriage? Do you still teach and practice it? I hear so much and read so much in the newspapers that one is bewildered. Tell me the truth about this.”

Elder Larsen had hardly got through with his explanations, which he was pleased to give, when the door opened, and Frue Steen entered with refreshments on a tray. The conversation on religious topics now ceased, and the remainder of the evening was spent pleasantly in other ways.

CHAPTER XI.

ELDER LARSEN HAS VISITORS.



AFTER Elder Larsen's visit to Strand, Halvor Steen hurried to Heimstad. He found Atelia a trifle paler and thinner than he had ever seen her. Not that she was dull or gloomy, but the saucy piquancy of former times had toned down to a more quiet gentleness. Her smile was as sweet as ever,—sweeter Halvor thought, tinged as it was with the sadness of recent events. Halvor had come unannounced, so after the first greeting, Atelia excused herself, sped to her room, and in a short time, reappeared in another dress. Had she fairies at her command that could, in such a short time, transform her to the angel which she seemed to Halvor. He arose to greet her again and took her hands; and as he stood there and looked at her, he thought of what Elder Larsen had said about the love that endures forever, and the possession which extends into the eternal worlds; and his whole being cried out, I want you, I want you always and forever!

“And now,” said Halvor to her as they were seated by the warm south window, “what are you going to do next? I understand that when all debts are paid, you will still have Heimstad House.”

“Yes; I must be thankful that I still have a home,—this house is all I have,—and the ‘Blue Bird.’”

“If it came to a pinch,” suggested Halvor with a twinkle in his eye, “you could lodge comfortable in the ‘Blue Bird.’”

“I wouldn’t have to pay rent, would I?”

“And you could have a change of scenery as often as you desired.”

“It would be splendid, ideal; but coming back to realities, I shall sell the boat. There is a neat sum of money tied up in it, which I must now have. Don’t you know some rich American who would give me what I think the boat is worth?”

Halvor didn’t, but he would help her find such a person. “And now,” said he, coming back to his question, “what are your plans?”

“I can’t live here alone, so I am going to close the house, or rather have the Nordo family live here and take care of it. They will be glad to do it, rent free. Then I thought of going to Christiania for a week or ten days, after which my plans take me for three months up the coast to visit with some of mother’s people.”

“Why not come and stay with us at Strand a while. Mother was just the other day speaking about you, and she would be glad to have you. She is alone most of the time.”

“Thank you. I shall be glad to visit and get

better acquainted with your mother; but I must go to Christiania first."

"Why, may I ask?"

"I don't mind telling. There is to be a gathering, or conference, I believe they call it, of Latter-day Saints in Christiania. I have accepted Elder Larsen's invitation to attend."

"Is it free for all,—I mean non-members as well as members?"

"Oh, yes; I understand all are welcome."

"Then I should like to go, too."

"I wish you would. I don't like to travel alone."

And so it was arranged that Atelia should call at Strand which was on the way, and there Halvor should join her. Because of this new arrangement, it would be necessary for Halvor to hurry back home that he might get his affairs in shape; so he left Heimstad that evening.

"It will be wiser not to say anything to mother about the Mormon Conference," he admonished Atelia as he was leaving; "she doesn't understand."

"Trust me," she said.

In due time Atelia called at Strand, and Halvor was ready to accompany her. Elder Larsen's headquarters were at Larvik, and as that town was not far away, they decided to call on him. The evening was closing in threatening rain when Halvor and Atelia alighted from the boat and

started in search of the Mormon headquarters. Halvor knew the town well, so was surprised that the address led them away from the business section to one of the poorest quarters. He knew of no place where offices for business and halls for meetings could be had in that part.

Street and number directions led them to a large two-story frame building. The number was over the entrance to a hall-way up which extended a flight of stairs. The two hesitated, then tried the stairs. They creaked noisily, and it was quite dark within. Surely, no church had its headquarters in such a crazy building.

At the further end of the upper hall, a small oil lamp was burning, and by its light they read a sign on a door to the left: "De Sidste-dages Heliges Forsamlings Lokal."

"This must be the place," said Halvor, and he knocked on the door, which in a moment was opened by Elder Larsen, who stood staring at them as if he could not believe his eyes.

"Good evening," said Halvor. "You see, we are returning the compliment and are calling on you this time."

"Come in. Well, who would have thought it," he exclaimed as he shook their hands. "This is indeed a surprise. Here, sit down."

They made a survey of the room, which certainly had neither the appearance of office nor church. A dozen unpainted benches were piled up in one end. A lounge with bedding on it

and a small table occupied the other part of the room near the stove in which there was no fire. A lamp hung over the table, and directly over the lamp-chimney was suspended a small tin pail. By the appearance of the table, Elder Larsen was about to dine, for it was set with one plate, one cup, a dish of potatoes (boiled in their jackets), a salted herring, and some bread. A newspaper served as tablecloth.

“Why, Elder Larsen, we are just in time for supper, I believe,” said Atelia.

The missionary was in his shirt sleeves. He had a table knife in his left hand, which in his embarrassment, he carried about and flourished when his speech needed emphasis.

“Yes; it will soon be ready; but my guests, coming on me like this, will have to excuse the cook if the eatables are below the desired quality and quantity.” The tin pail above the lamp now began to simmer and then to sing. Waldemar mounted a chair, unhooked the pail from above its lamp-chimney stove, and placed it, steaming, on the table. Elder Larsen stood back, looked at his table, then at his visitors, and then he laughed. The others laughed also.

“Elder Larsen,” asked Atelia, “what have you in your soup kettle? I believe it’s something so good that you don’t want to give us any of it.”

Waldemar took the lid from the pail. “It’s nothing but ‘öl-ost,’ he explained; “and it’s ‘ost’ in very deed. The milk must have been sour.”

“Why, I’m in luck,” cried Halvor; “that’s just what I like. I always hope that mother will get sour milk when she makes ‘öl-ost;’ but here, Larsen, eat your supper; it’s getting cold.”

“You’ll have some with me?”

“Of course we will,” said both the others.

Whereupon Waldemar fetched from a trunk in a corner two more cups, knives, forks, and plates, and would have replaced the newspaper with a white cloth, but Atelia forbade him.

“Well, it’s ready,” said the host; and then chairs were drawn up, and Elder Larsen asked the blessing. Atelia adeptly peeled the potatoes, while Waldemar cleaned the herring. Halvor did justice to the contents of the pail. They were all in good spirits, and really enjoyed themselves.

“We have a very small branch of the Church here,” explained Elder Larsen, “most of them poor people, so we get very little help from them. A missionary’s funds are usually low too, towards the close of his mission, therefore, he can not do much in the way of display. That accounts for these poor quarters.”

“I understand you get no salary for this work,” said Halvor. “How can you do it? You fellows over in America must all be rich.”

“Oh, no; it doesn’t cost much to live in this way; and then, when a person is willing to make sacrifices, the way opens, and the Lord provides. Of course, back of all this missionary work which is done by our people stands fixedly the belief

that true riches does not consist in this world's goods.—But may I ask, how did you come to make this call?"

"We are going to conference," said Atelia.

"Are you? good."

"And we hoped you would go with us. We're both novices at going to conference, you know."

Waldemar did not reply to this. When the meal was ended, the dishes were placed under a cloth. The missionary explained he would attend to them later. There being no meeting that evening, they would do a little visiting. The others were delighted with the proposition.

"We will call on Brother and Sister Olsen," said Elder Larsen. "I believe there is choir practice this evening.

Brother Olsen proved to be a prosperous tradesman who could afford an organ, therefore the reason for choir practice at his home. Sister Olsen greeted them cordially, and while they were seated in the best room, she prepared and brought chocolate and cake. A number of young people began to arrive, and soon there was opportunity for Atelia Heldman and Hr. Steen to study at close hand life among the Norwegian Latter-day Saints.

Both Halvor and Atelia did not fail to notice the gladness with which each greeted the other. All shook hands and said good evening, and smiled, and chatted like so many dear friends who had not seen each other for a long time. They

were all plainly of the middle and poorer classes. Still, to Atelia, they all seemed like brothers and sisters of the flesh, as they indeed were of the spirit. She studied them keenly. She realized as never before, because this was her first experience, that the same spirit which each of these people were in possession of had been also conferred upon her. In her baptism, she had been born again into a new world,—and here were some of its inhabitants! How would she like them, and their manner of living?

As they gathered around the organ, played by one of the Olsen girls, they sang songs in which sentiments of "Beautiful Zion" prevailed. From an artistic viewpoint, these songs and singers were not classical; but there was something about them which made a still, sweet glow of joy penetrate the heart. Froken Heldman, the winner of the National Regatta, was not ashamed to be one with this simple company of honest people!

About ten o'clock the company dispersed. Sister Olsen, who knew of Atelia's being a Church member, asked her to remain with them over night, which kindness was gladly accepted. Halvor went to a hotel; but before they parted he had tried to get Waldemar to promise to go with them to Christiania the next day. The missionary made excuses, the most vital though unmentioned one being that his friends travelled first class on the train, while he would have to be content with deck passage on a boat.

CHAPTER XII.

ATELIA SAYS YES—BUT—



ANY of the European railroad cars are divided into small compartments with entrance doors at the sides. One car may have three classes: the first class is furnished elegantly; the second is upholstered and is comfortable; the third has painted wooden walls and seats. The compartment or coupe is a small room about eight feet square with seats on two sides across the car, facing each other. These small compartments may at times become very uncomfortable, especially if one is unfortunate enough to have for his close company a number of smokers; but on other occasions, the coupe is "just the thing."

On just such a favorable occasion Halvor and Atelia left Larvik on the train. They occupied a first class coupe, and Halvor had by a silver coin to the conductor purchased freedom from interference by other passengers. The day was cold enough to have the small charcoal heater in the floor lighted, so that everything was comfortable within. Atelia took off her hat, and leaned her head against the soft cushions. Halvor sat opposite.

She had been very kind to him that day, and

he thought of it as he sat looking at her face. Her eyes were closed as if she were resting them from the glare of the sun. He knew her to be always good and true, but recently there had been something added to her—a deeper expression in her eyes, a sweeter smile on her lips, a milder tone, a firmer grip of his fingers when she grasped them in salutation—these were some of the parts of the added whole; and yet these did not express the whole.

Halvor Steen did not know that Atelia had passed through the sanctifying baptism of water and of the Spirit, so it was not strange that he did not understand the nature of the change which he saw in her. But one thing was certain to him that day, and that was that the girl opposite him was a wonderfully charming one, and that he loved her more than ever.

“Atelia,” said he, “I saw a picture of you when I was in Christiania last.”

“Is that so? Where?”

“In a shop window in Karl Johan Street.”

“You’re not in earnest? I haven’t had a photograph taken for at least two years.”

“That may be. I think you were about two years younger in this picture. There were two other girls in it besides you.”

“They surely are not displaying that picture!”

“You remember it then?”

“If it’s the one I mean. Some two years ago, I and two other girls were up in Maartman’s

gallery. He rigged us up in Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish national costumes and had us pose for a picture. We were to represent the three Scandinavian nations, he said."

"Yes, 'Norden' he has called it. See, here it is." He moved over by her side, and drawing the picture from his pocket, showed it to her.

"The very thing," she laughed. "I have one at home."

"I bought one to get the central standing figure."

"The other two girls are much prettier."

"Not in my eyes." He held the picture at arms length. The other hand slid under her arm and held her close, so that she also might see from his view point. "What are you looking so intently at? You seem to be gazing into the distance."

"I am supposed to be looking into our country's splendid future."

"How unselfishly patriotic! There is then nothing personal in those soulful eyes under the shaded hand? I wish there might have been. If I had been in your thoughts for instance, the expression on your face would have told me much."

"But Halvor," she said, with a gentle pressure of her arm on his, "I didn't know you very well then."

The train slowed up for a station, then stopped. More passengers crowded in, but as they were

farmers, the first class travelers were not disturbed. Halvor would have disputed any third person's right to share their coupe. The train rolled on through a wooded valley and skirted a lake on a road-bed cut from solid rock. The berry foliage on the hills was tinted with yellow and red.

Halvor and Atelia sat with arms linked, looking out of the car window. Was that which she had longed for, yet dreaded, now at hand? She trembled a little, and his arm slipped around her in a protecting way. She made no objection to Halvor's pressing her head to his shoulder.

"Atelia," he said, "it's going to be very lonesome for you at Heimstad."

"It is already."

"Then why not come and live with me at Strand?"

"I'm coming to visit with you when we get back from conference, you know."

"Atelia, visit with mother; but come and live with me. I—I want you. Life is very lonesome without you, I have found that out.... I love you...."

The three most wonderful words in language were spoken.

He drew her close into his arms and kissed her; and as he looked into that radiant face which reflected undimmed his own love, he took courage again, and his tongue found words. Gentle and low they were, for fear they might be heard

above the rattle of the train, but charged with the fire of his soul. And she drank in his words as if they were the wine of life to her, for an instant looking intently into his face, then dropping her eyes in confusion at her burning cheeks. She clung to his hands with gentle fervor as if she also wanted him to stay with her and take away the loneliness which had come into her life. It seemed hard for her to answer his many questions, but as her actions spoke of her love louder than words, he was content. At length she got courage to say, as she nestled close:

“Yes, Halvor, I do love you. I am lonesome without you; I—I would have you by me always, Halvor, always,—and forever.”

“And you shall, my darling.”

Another station. How close they were together—the stations! Why does the train need to stop at every hamlet? But this time the stop was not long, and they were soon off, climbing slowly a pine-clad mountain side.

“And now,” said Halvor, “when shall we two who love each other so much get married? If I had my way, we would go to Pastor Skogaard the moment we get to Christiania. He is an old friend of ours, and would be delighted to—”

“Don’t, Halvor; don’t talk like that.”

“Forgive me dear; I am forgetting all the proprieties. You, of course, will want to make the proper announcements; and it will take you

some time to prepare your trousseau and send out the invitations.”

Atelia disengaged herself from her lover, sat upright, and went through the usual feminine toilet adjustments. The big brown braid was seriously disarranged, and by the time she had it safely in place, she had composed herself very well. Then she tried to lead the conversation to other topics than the one just considered; but Halvor would not be led away.

“Can’t you tell me, Atelia, about when we may be married? Why wait long? I see no reason for delay. We have known each other for a long time; yes, and loved each other too, haven’t we?”

Atelia nodded her assent, the last hairpin still between her lips.

“How would a month from today do?”

“Oh, Halvor,” she replied, placing her hand on his arm, “I haven’t promised to marry you at all.” This with a smile, as if she were teasing him.

“But, dear girl, you love me, and I love you, and the rest follows.”

“Yes, that’s true; but—but not always.”

“No; but in our case, there is nothing to hinder.”

“Halvor, I told you I love you—and I do, Halvor, I do—but let that suffice for the present.”

The young man became silent as if not knowing what to say.

"The Lord will be good to us, Oh, yes, I know that," she added; "but—"

She struggled to keep back the tears, then wiped them away as she called herself a silly goose, and forced a little laugh.

"I wish you would trust me, Atelia. You are holding something from me. Between us two there should be no secrets now. As our hearts are one, so also should be our thoughts and desires, should they not?"

"Yes, they should."

"Then why—"

"Tunsberg!" shouted the guard as he opened the door of the train, which had slowed up and stopped ere the two travelers had well realized it. As this point was the end of the railroad journey, Halvor gathered wraps and grips, and they stepped out. The remainder of the way to Christiania was to be made by boat. Consulting a time-table, they learned that they had an hour to wait, which time they decided to spend in sight-seeing. Near by the station in Tunsberg, is a high hill, on top of which stands a tower. A few minutes walk up a roadway cut out of the solid rock, brought them to the top of the hill where they found quite a large, flat area covered with trees and a number of old ruins scattered about. The keeper of the tower, an old man, ascended the steps with them to the top. Then he told them of the town's history, that

it was the oldest town in Norway and once had been an important stronghold; that the hill had once been strongly fortified, and many bloody scenes had been enacted there; that King Sverre had at one time besieged it for twenty years.

The two young travelers were not in the best of mood to take the keenest interest in an old man's talk, even if his theme was such an interesting one as that of Tunsberg and its tower built to commemorate the town's one thousandth year of existence, so they listened as patiently as they could, with thoughts on other and nearer things, until they had to descend again and go on board the boat. The afternoon was closing when the boat slipped through the canal which here cuts a low neck of land and opens a passage into Christiania fjord.

Atelia put on her wraps and Halvor his overcoat and they paced arm in arm on the small deck. As the night came on, the moon arose over a wooded hill only to disappear behind a higher peak, then return. The waters of the fjord were still. The hills on both sides made a dark background to the shining sea. Where the fjord narrowed, lights twinkled from the dark strip of land lying between the lighter sea and sky.

"You are tired," said Halvor to his companion. "Let us sit down here." They found chairs in the lee of the wind. He adjusted her wraps. "Do you feel cold?" he asked.

"Oh, no; thank you; button your own coat."

He did so. "What a beautiful night it is!"

"I think the fjord is a much more beautiful highway of travel than the dusty, shaky, cramped cars."

"Yes." The single monosyllable was the extent of his reply for some time. Halvor Steen was busy with thoughts that would not away. Atelia was a puzzle to him. She loved him—words and acts told him that plainly, yet she would not promise to marry him. Why? Surely, she was not playing with him? But why should she do that? No; that was absurd. She was an honest, honorable girl.... Could there be anything in her associations with Elder Larsen and his religion? A pang of jealousy shot through him at the thought. She was very open and free with Elder Larsen. Could there be—? The night was getting cold.

And the girl beside him that evening also had thoughts, which she could not put into words. They had to do with her love for Halvor, and the knowledge that she now had of his love for her. Her heart glowed with the thought, and yet there was a pain deep down that she could not wholly cover. Would God continue to be good to her and make him also see the light. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." The apostle's admonition seemed to sound loudly in her ears. She had come across the passage just the other day. She had not

been seeking for such advice, but rather hoping to find something which would justify her in another course; but one can't run away from the Lord.

“What? Did you speak, Halvor?”

“No; I said nothing.”

Then silence again, save the rhythmical sound of the steamer's machinery. The stars above were diamond points. Atelia looked up at them.

Would she have to choose some day between love and duty? Would she have wisdom and strength if that time ever came? The Lord had been good to her. He had answered her prayers in the past; He would answer them in the future. She had prayed that Halvor Steen would not succeed where success might lift him up in pride of heart and make it harder for him to humble himself to the truth; and this had been answered, perhaps in his recent political failure. Yes, the Lord was with them. She would keep up her courage in doing what she knew to be right.

“Atelia,” said Halvor, “tell me why you will not promise to marry me.”

“I have not said I will not marry you, Halvor.”

“But you evade. I want to know why.”

She did not reply.

“How long must I wait?”

“I don't know.”

“A month—six months?”

“I cannot tell you.”

"A year—ten years."

"Oh, I hope not, Halvor."

"But what is it that you cannot trust to me? I don't like this mystery. It isn't fair. You know my feelings. You know my life, Atelia, and I tell you there isn't anything in it but that you may know. It hasn't been free from faults, I know well enough, but they are such as you can forgive."

"Halvor," she whispered from her full heart, "I love you, only you, as I have told you. Is not that enough?"

"No; it is not enough. If you love me, tell me you will marry me, and when. Give me a reason for your peculiar action." His tone was not kind.

She drew away from him as if he had struck her.

"You humiliate me," he went on—"But there, forgive me. Let us go down and have something to eat."

She declined. Then they sat in silence until the lights of the city came into view. In a short time the boat lay up to the wharf. Halvor hailed a carriage into which he placed Atelia who was going to stay with a friend. He himself was to lodge in a near-by hotel.

"Goodnight," he said. "I shall call for you in the morning at about nine-thirty. Will that be early enough?"

"Yes; thank you; goodnight."

CHAPTER XIII.

HALVOR AND ATELIA ATTEND CONFERENCE.



AT nine thirty next morning Halvor called for Atelia. She was ready, and together they walked to meeting. From the well-known Storgaden they turned up Osterhaus and soon arrived at No. 27, the Latter-day Saints' headquarters. They were much surprised to see Elder Larsen meet them at the entrance.

"How and when did you get here?" they asked him.

"This morning by the boat. Glad to see you. Come right along with me."

He led the way up two flights of stairs to a landing which opened into a large assembly room, nearly filled with people. Elder Larsen found them a seat.

Both Atelia and Halvor were somewhat surprised at what they saw as they now looked about them, for a picture of Elder Larsen's headquarters in Larvik had entered into their conception of Osterhaus 27. They understood, in a way, that the Latter-day Saints were largely of the humbler classes, for, as Elder Larsen had contended, "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble," will listen to the testimony of simple men; but here was a very respectable looking class of people, and

the room itself was beautiful. Its oval ceiling was tinted, and the wood-work shone with paint and varnish. Streamers of evergreen extended from each of the corners of the room to the large central chandelier. Festoons of green adorned the walls. In front of the stand was an artistically arranged bank of green, reindeer moss, and flowers.

On the stand sat about twenty men, the "Elders from Zion." Atelia and Halvor knew but two of them besides Elder Larsen. Most of them were young men and all had clear, open countenances. One of the Elders, whom the two visitors knew stepped down, shook hands, and gave them a hymn book. Then the President, or presiding Elder, announced a hymn which was sung by choir and congregation. There was prayer and more singing, then the Elders spoke. Some reported the condition of the work in their various fields, some related interesting experiences, and then one, a little more proficient in language it seemed, preached a sermon on the first principles of the gospel.

The services were simple, and yet so full of spiritual uplift that Atelia sat as one entranced. The singing filled her heart with music; the beautiful principles of the gospel found welcome lodgment in her soul. She now realized more fully what it meant to be one with the people of God and to be entitled to receive the comforting ministrations of the Holy Spirit. The

light which had been kindled in her soul enlarged her vision and extended until she felt as though she was comprehending the eternal truths of the celestial world. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you," were the closing words of the speaker.

Atelia came to earth again. Beside her was Halvor Steen. Was he listening? Was he being impressed? In her heart she prayed that he might be, for she had need of him, not only for her own happiness, but to help her in the work which she saw devolved upon her for her departed kindred. She was seeking first the kingdom of God,—and He would surely add all she required. Yes, Halvor was listening with close attention. In her happiness, she had almost forgotten yesterday's unpleasantness.

At the close of the services Halvor and Atelia remained seated. Instead of passing out, most of the congregation lingered to shake hands and to exchange greetings. Halvor remarked to Atelia that it was the Larvik scene on a larger scale. Elder Larsen, shaking hands on his way to them, now introduced the President, a pleasant looking, gray-bearded man, who chatted with them for some time. Other Elders and some of the Saints were introduced to the beautiful young woman and her handsome companion, and many were the surmises as to what and who they were. Froken Heldman's fame as the win-

ner at the season's national regatta had not, as a rule, penetrated to the secluded life of the church members.

Elder Larsen invited his two friends to the office, a small room on the same floor. He bade them to be seated while he excused himself for a moment, and when he returned, he found them looking at the photographs of the missionaries on the wall.

"This isn't bad, Larsen," said Halvor. "Who are all these men in black frames?"

"Oh, these are missionaries who have been here. See this one—that's my father. He was here on a mission ten years ago. And this—"

The President here interrupted by an invitation to go with him for lunch, but as Atelia had promised to return to her friends, she had to decline. Arrangements were made, however, that she and Halvor were to accompany Elder Larsen and the President after the evening meeting.

Meetings were held both afternoon and evening, both of which Atelia and Halvor attended.

"I am breaking the record," said he.

"In what way?"

"I have never been to three religious meetings in one day before."

"You're not tired?"

"Not at all; it's quite interesting."

After the evening meeting they went out on the street with a party of friends. The

threatened rain had come, so umbrellas were in demand.

"Here," said Waldemar to Halvor, "take my umbrella. Your Norwegian article was never made to shelter two. This big American one covers some area."

"Thank you," said Halvor, as he accepted the offer, "I never quite appreciated your ugly umbrella before."

Atelia clung closely to his arm. Brother and Sister Vold, whom they were to visit, lived in a basement floor, but their rooms were neat and clean, and the little company was warmly welcomed.

The evening passed very pleasantly. Atelia talked with the girls who at first were a little shy. All of them were working girls, but they were bright and intelligent. Atelia was especially drawn to those of them who had personally investigated the gospel, and had by accepting its principles, drawn upon them the contempt of former friends and the persecution of parents. Surely, here was strength of character which she had not met in girls before. Her own trials dimmed before some which her sisters had endured.

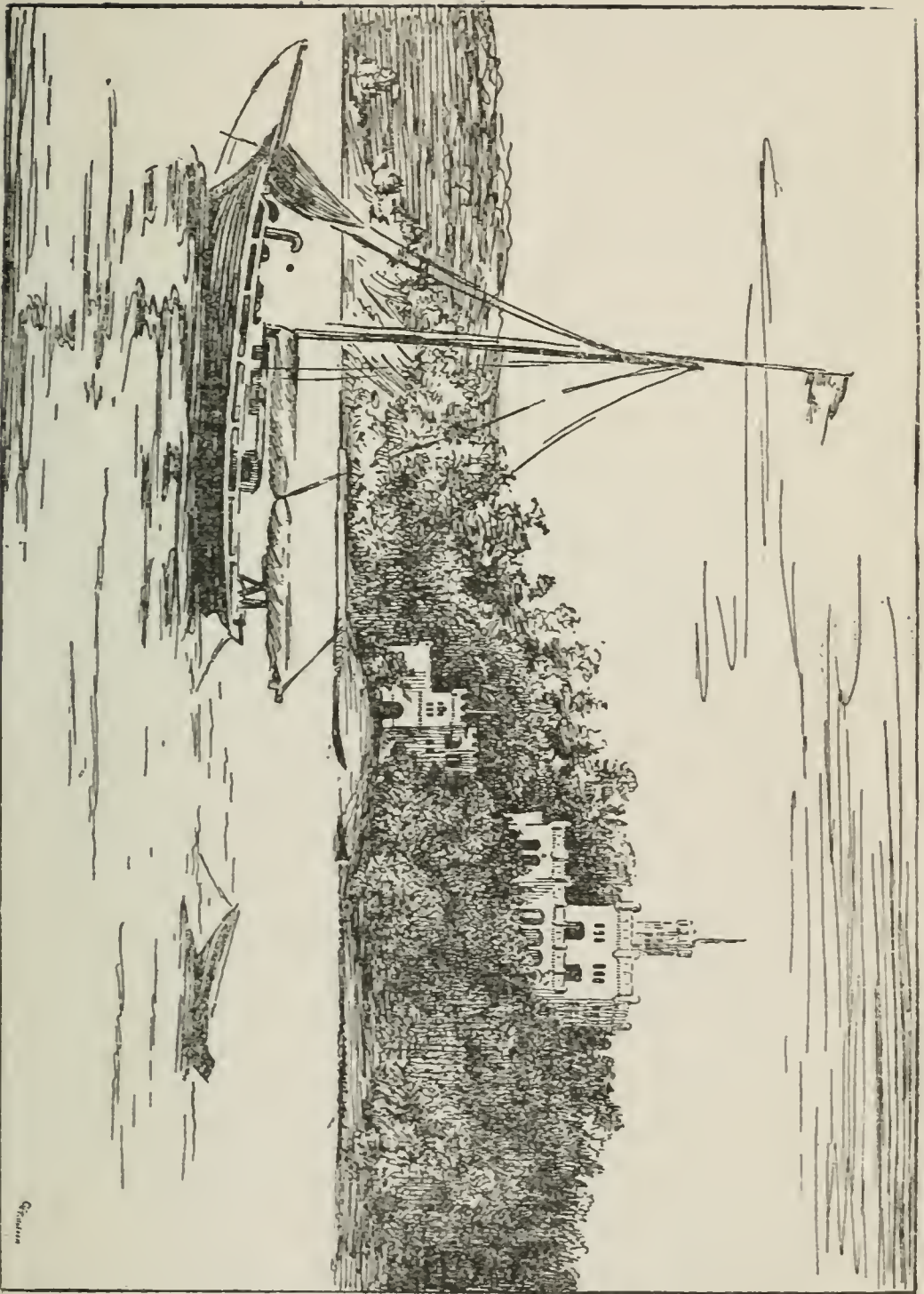
"I haven't been home for three months," said one of them, a tall, quiet girl whose big blue eyes filled with tears as she spoke. "I work at the cotton factory, and live with an old lady up in Nydal. I have three sisters and a brother,

a little fellow who thinks the world of me. It was largely on his account that I ventured homeward last. I had intended to go to a neighbor's first, but little Olof saw me, and with a shout came running. Father looked out of the door, and seeing me coming up the path, closed the door in my face."

The company partook of a dainty luncheon, then they sang songs until it was time to go home. Halvor retained his big umbrella, though the rain had nearly ceased.

The next morning Halvor told Atelia that he had received a message from home which would necessitate his leaving during the day. Was she ready to go with him? She hesitated, explaining that she had promised to take part with some of her friends in a little trip on the Fjord and to "Laadergaardsoen's" pleasure gardens. Well, he could remain most of the day. Would she go with him towards evening? She paused again, and Halvor was annoyed. Did she prefer the company of these others to his own? He did not press her for a definite answer, but accepted without further words the plans for the morning. They sailed on the Fjord. The white walls of Oscar's Hall gleamed from the green setting, and the beauty of the place invited them across the water; but all that morning there were clouds in Halvor's sky which Atelia could not dispel.

"Well," asked he, "are you going with me



“The white walls of Oscar’s Hall gleamed from the green setting.”

Shaw

this evening?" They were sitting by themselves in a warm, sunny opening of the trees on a hill-top.

"There is a meeting in the hall tonight which I should very much like to attend," said Atelia.

"Haven't you had enough? What's one meeting more or less, when I want you, Atelia?" he pleaded.

"I promised Elder Larsen—"

"Never mind Elder Larsen. Promise me something also."

"Halvor, don't be angry. This is a meeting of church members—I mean, this is the sacrament meeting, and—"

"And—well, let the Church members attend. I don't like to go home alone and I don't think you do either."

"I am sorry you have to go so soon. I was thinking of remaining a few days more with Elder Larsen's friends and with Froken Berg. She complained only this morning of my leaving her to go to so many meetings."

"Well, I'm selfish, I suppose," laughed Halvor; at which Atelia breathed easier, thinking a certain crisis which seemed about to arise had passed; but the very next remark Halvor made, brought back her fears.

"What is this meeting tonight?" he asked. "I have heard no announcement of it."

"No; I was just told of it by Elder Larsen."

"Oh, it's a sort of secret affair, is it?"

“Not at all. I have never attended a sacrament meeting, so I can’t say anything about it.”

“Well, Atelia, I might stretch a point and remain until after the meeting. I’ll look up a time table and see if there is a late train.”

Atelia was troubled. This sacrament meeting was for members only. Elder Larsen had explained that this precaution was taken because the strict letter of the law in Norway forbade the Mormons from performing any religious ceremony or rite. A number of times they had gotten into trouble by someone informing on them. The law was a dead letter, but when someone made trouble, the officers had to take some notice. Halvor certainly could be trusted; but—

Halvor saw the troubled expression on her face, and then another thing suddenly came to him. “You said this meeting was for church members only. I forgot. That lets me out. Your invitation was a special one I suppose.”

“No, Halvor, it wasn’t.” She arose and looked down the hill to the little party of friends by the water. They seemed to be amusing themselves in a game. She wished they would call to Halvor and her to come and join them, but they did not. What could she do? There was a struggle for a moment, then she turned to Halvor and said with as much freedom as she could muster, “Halvor, I’ll go with you home this afternoon—as soon as you want to go.”

“And miss your meeting?”

“Yes.”

“Atelia, you have an invitation to attend a meeting where my presence is not desired.” His pleasantry had left him, and his speech was terse and emphatic. “You were going to this meeting; but my offer to remain spoiled something. What does it mean? Are you treating me right? If your invitation was not a special one, then you must also be a church member. Atelia, are you?”

She could have cried, but she must not do that. She must control herself; she must not drive him away; but what could she say other than the simple truth.

“You do not answer me. I want to know. Atelia, are you a member of the Mormon Church?”

“Yes—” timidly with downward glance; then raising her head as if ashamed of her own timidity, “Yes, Halvor, I am a member of the Mormon Church; but Halvor”—again her tone became tender—“you do not understand about this meeting. Let me explain.”

“You need not. I don’t understand. I am a simpleton. I am not one of the initiated. You have joined the Mormons and I did not know. Why haven’t I been told before?” Halvor was angry now.

She could not answer all his questions. She

held up her arm to her face as if to shield herself from the cruel blows of his words; but she kept her presence of mind, due, she knew afterwards, to the prayer which was in her heart.

After the first outburst of anger, Halvor grew silent as if with pain of soul. It was all right to associate with Mormon Elders, to listen to their talk, and even to attend their meetings; but to become members of the Church—well, that was too much; and to think that Atelia, this Atelia who stood before him now with heaving breast and quivering lips, beautiful, yes, more beautiful than ever—that she was a Mormon, she whom he had just a few hours before asked to be his wife, she who had rested her head on his shoulder and had said that she loved him! Then his anger rose again.

“Halvor,” she said, “the steamer is coming, and I think the folks want us to go down. I’ll go with you home.”

“No; you’ll stay to your meeting.”

“I would rather not.”

“I want you to. Come, they are beckoning us.”

They went down the hill to where the little pleasure boat was just tying to the shore. The party embarked, and they were soon landed back in Christiania.

Halvor took Atelia to Froken Berg, where she was staying.

“Won’t you come in?” she asked at the door.

“No; I’ll have to hurry to catch the train.”

“When—when shall I see you again?”

“Why, when you come to visit with mother—
on your way home.”

“Do you want me to come?”

“Yes; I do want you to.”

“Are you sure?”

“I am very sure, Atelia.”

“Then I’ll come. Goodby until then.”

“Goodby.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PRESIDENT TALKS ON LOVE.



HE headache which Atelia complained of to Froken Berg that afternoon was not feigned; her heart ached also. She went to her room, and had a good cry as she lay across her bed. The cry helped a little, so that from the confusion of suffering and conflicting emotions, she could get a little orderly thinking.

Had Halvor left her for good? No; she was to visit with him at Strand. But was not that just the gallantry of carrying out his promise? Had she lost him by becoming a Mormon? Well, she hoped not, prayed not; but with the pain accompanying the thought, there also came a stiffening of her resolution to be true to her convictions. She knew she had done nothing wrong. She knew she had more of the light of heaven, more truth, more power to overcome; and when one's resolutions are based on knowledge such as this, the victory is well under way.

As she lay now with eyes open, looking out of the window at the closing day, she thought of Halvor on the train alone. She would gladly have gone with him, though plainly, he did not believe that. His journey home would be quite

different from the one they had taken together. She admitted that Halvor had real cause for complaint, for how could he know that underneath her peculiar actions there was nothing but the best wishes for him? Yes; he had some justification. She had admitted to him that she wanted to beat him at the boat race for a purpose, but she would not tell him what that purpose was; she had acknowledged that she loved him, but would not promise to marry him; she had joined a very unpopular religion, and had not told him of it; she was going to a meeting where he was not invited. Surely no man with any spirit would fail to be offended at her. But what could she do more than she was doing?

The tears were near the surface that afternoon, and she turned her face to the pillow again. The noise of the city came through the open window like the hum of many insects in a field on a summer day. The short afternoon closed, and darkness came on. Atelia was tired, and as she closed her eyes, peace came to her, and she fell asleep.

When she awoke, she sat up with a start, and looked at her watch. She had slept soundly, and the meeting hour had arrived to the minute. She could not get there in time; she would have to miss it altogether. Why had she slept so long? But she was feeling much better, thanks for that.

A gentle knock came on the door, and Atelia opened it, admitting Froken Berg.

“Oh, is it you, Christine, come in.”

“Did I disturb you?”

“No! I had a nice nap; but I was awake when you knocked.”

“I was anxious about you. How is your head?”

“Much better—but do you know, I slept so long that I am too late for a meeting which I wanted to attend.”

“You’ve done nothing but attend meetings since you’ve been here. What is the nature of these wonderful meetings, Atelia?”

“Why, don’t you know? I thought I told you.”

“Only that they are held at Osterhausgade 27; but that must be a mistake. I looked up that number today, and found that that is the headquarters of the Mormons.”

The two girls were sitting by the dressing table. Oh, dear, thought Atelia, here is more trouble; but she said, “No; there is no mistake; I have been attending Mormon meetings.”

“But surely, Atelia, you know of the bad name these people have! What in the world—”

“Yes; I have heard of their bad reputation; but I know their character, and, as we were saying the other day, those two things are quite different.”

“But is there any good in the Mormons?”

“That sounds very much like a question that was asked by Nathanael of old when he heard

of Jesus, and that he came from Nazareth.”

“What do you mean?”

“‘Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?’ he asked; and Philip’s answer was, ‘Come and see.’”

Froken Berg was plainly annoyed, so Atelia said no more; she did not wish to lose another old friend; but Froken Berg, after a moment persisted:

“I had no idea, Atelia, you were attending Mormon meetings. Johanna Franson was telling me something today, and that’s why I became interested. Don’t you think it’s foolish to continue your visits? It’s well enough to go once for curiosity, and I would like to go with you for that, but to make a practice—why, people will think you also are a Mormon.”

Atelia did not reply. She took refuge for the moment in the basin of cold water in which she was bathing her face; but her friend went on:

“You ought to be careful, Atelia. People are talking already.”

“People must have something to talk about,” replied Atelia through the towel.

“But I wouldn’t like to be spoken about as the Mormons are.”

“No; none of us would like that; but, Christine, did it ever occur to you that people are sometimes held up to scorn because they have the truth. Sometimes the truth is unpopular.”

“What nonsense.”

“But, Christine,”—Atelia was re-arranging her thick braids, which little business helped her to make it appear that she was only casually discussing this matter—“you are acquainted with your Bible, and you can there read that the first Christians were ‘everywhere spoken against.’ That wasn’t because they were a bad people, was it?”

“But it’s different now. We live in a civilized age, a modern country. Christians are no longer persecuted.”

“I know of some who are—but let’s not talk about that any more. I’m hungry. Have you something good to eat?”

They went down stairs. Atelia did not intend to dramatically proclaim herself a Mormon, and thus bring on a scene; but she chose the wiser way, and, instead of going to her meeting that evening, she adroitly got her friend to listen to her expound some of the beautiful principles of the gospel. After the first struggle of resentment, Christine Berg sat quite still and listened to her friend, and it was not until the close of the evening when she had mellowed under the influence of the gospel spirit, that she learned that what she had been drinking in so readily was Mormonism, and further, that Atelia herself was a Mormon. These revelations stunned the young woman into silence for the remainder of the evening and Atelia was permitted to go

to bed in peace, and to forget for a time the sorrow of her own heart.

Froken Berg was off to her work before Atelia came down next morning. After a light breakfast, Atelia went out for a walk down to the water. She was uncertain what she should do, and she needed time to think. A big ocean steamer was being loaded at the pier, and she soon became interested in watching the work. Her father had sailed many such ships, and she had sailed with him a number of times. Once, she recalled, she had gone to Spain, and at her return, she had been called Senora Heldman, for people said the additional brown in her cheeks had made her look like a Spanish beauty. . . . That morning she lingered for some time about the wharf with its shipping and suggestions of sea-faring life, all of which had its interest for her; then she walked up to Karl Johan Street, and as she had seen Henrik Ibsen do, she looked leisurely in the shop windows. In one of the art stores she saw "Norden" enlarged from the original photograph and beautifully tinted and framed. She looked closely at the central figure, and recalled what Halvor had said about the wistfull, far-away look. Yes, it was there, but then it was rather more prophetic than real.

She walked on nearly up to the King's Castle, crossed the street, went back on the other side to Stor Street then to the market square. The

market was always interesting. Among the women who sold apples and berries was a sister—a member of the Church. Elder Larsen had pointed her out one day, but had explained that he rarely went near her for the reason that he could not get away without having to take her gifts of fruit, which he surmised often played havoc with her profits. However, Atelia saw her this morning, went up to her, chatted for some time, and she too went away with the gift of an apple.

Before she was well aware, Atelia found herself in Osterhausgade. The street seemed to draw her. She wanted to talk with somebody, and who better could advise her than the President. She would call on him. She went a little timidly up the stairs. All was quiet. She met none of the Elders. She knocked on the office door, and the President himself let her in.

“You are with us yet?” he asked, as he gave her a seat, and perched himself again on the high office stool by the desk at which he had been working. “Are you enjoying yourself?”

She assured him that the meetings had been a source of great strength to her. Now would he have time to talk to her. She wanted some advice.

The President slid from the stool, drew a chair up to the table where his visitor was sitting and asked, “Now, what can I do for you?”

Atelia had difficulty in beginning. The President saw it, and talked pleasantly to her. "It takes courage for a person of your station in life to do as you have done," he said. "You have had trials, which, I take it, are not yet ended. The sailing will not always be smooth, but as I understand, you are a good sailor, you ought to weather any storm."

"Especially with such a fine, staunch craft as the good ship Zion," Atelia said and smiled back at the President's pleasant and personal figures of speech.

Then when there seemed perfect confidence established between the two, Atelia told him her story. His face lighted up like the face of her father, she thought, as she told him of Captain Heldman and his interest in the gospel. She told him of her father's death, and of the condition of the estate; of her Uncle Sande's actions; and by this time she could with less difficulty approach the subject just then nearest her heart—that of the state of things between herself and Halvor Steen. She had questioned herself whether or not she could counsel with anyone other than the Lord on this matter, but the President drove away any fears, as she went on with her story and her problems. He listened quietly until she had finished, then he began:

"First, let me say that I appreciate your confidence, and shall respect it. Not many young people, now-a-days, will bring their love problems

to the counsel of father and mother, or others who might act as such. That you have done so speaks well for you, and I hope I shall be able to help you."

"Thank you."

"The ways of the Lord are wonderful, as instanced in your case in bringing to you the gospel, and preparing your heart to receive it. In due time, as Elder Larsen has told you, your father and mother and all your worthy dead will be taken care of. You said that you are the last of your father's family; but what about your mother's?"

"Oh, there are a lot of them."

"Then you have a duty to them also. The living should have the privilege of hearing the gospel, for the sooner we get into the way of life, the sooner we will reach the goal; but you will have to have a man to help you."

"So Elder Larsen also said." The slight emphasis on "man" did not escape her.

"And I suppose you hope Hr. Steen will be that man."

"Yes."

"I too hope so, dear sister, for he impressed me as being a clean, honest young man. He thinks a lot of you, I imagine."

"He has said as much."

"And you—pardon me, but we are to be very free with our confidences, you know."

"Yes," she answered, with just a tint of rising color, "I like him very much."

"Love is a great thing—a great power; but it must be genuine. You have had and still have beautiful ideas of love."

"I've always thought of it as the greatest thing in the world."

"You have read that in a book, haven't you?" There was a little good-natured banter in his tone.

"Why, yes; I have read it in a book."

"Don't you know that books are often not true to life, unnaturally idealistic in fact?"

"Yes, some books are; but this one from which I quote is a standard, and by a good author." She was following his lead.

"I am not well versed in your literature."

"But this is your literature." She reached for a Bible on the table. "It is found in First Corinthians, thirteenth chapter. Let me read you a quotation: 'Love suffereth long, and is kind. . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth. . . . And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.'"

"You have proved your case," said the President with a smile. "Now let us go a little deeper into this question of love being the greatest thing in the world. Seeing that you have led the way, I'll quote a little Scripture also: 'Love

is of God,' for 'God is love.' How is that love manifest? 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Jesus also declared: 'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you,' meaning his disciples. Paul tells us that faith is a most powerful principle, doesn't he?"

"Yes," said the girl as the President paused for a reply.

"He also tells that faith becomes a power only when it is applied in some action; for, as you know, 'faith without works is dead.' Now, follow me, sister: may not the nature of love be essentially that of faith? that is, love is not love until it is made manifest in action. As examples, God manifested his love for us by sending his Son to us; that Son showed us his love by laying down his life for us. In fact, the scriptures are full of this thought: 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.'"

Atelia listened attentively, wondering just what the President was coming to.

"Now, love is wonderful, powerful—yes, the biggest thing in the world, as you said. It has come to us from the eternity of the past; it will reach into the eternity of the future. Love will never fail, for God is love, and that's the reason. Now—" and the President hitched his chair nearer the table and lowered his voice

a little, "let us get down to earth, to Norway, to Heimstad, and Osterhaus 27. What profit is there in your loving a man who will not believe the gospel, will not repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Such a man may walk with you for a time in this world, and you may enjoy his company for a season, but if he persists in his way and you persist in yours, as sure as we are sitting here, your paths will diverge, and in time will become so far apart that you will be lost to each other. Your love for him may be as deep, as wide as eternity; but the only way it can save him is for it to move him to action towards the right."

Atelia's heart seemed to stop for a moment; then it beat hard as if it would burst; a wave of fear swept through it.

"This talk of love, as it is generally understood," continued the President, "being able to accomplish impossibilities, is deceptive. The sooner we look the plain, sometimes hard truth in the face, the better. Men and women swear undying love to each other. The mere expression of their feelings, they think, is enough to bind them together forever. They forget that law governs in this world as in all worlds, and to obtain any desired end or condition, the law upon which it is predicated must be observed. To get into the kingdom of heaven—the only place in the future where men and women associate as husbands and wives—one must enter

in at the door, which is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Atelia looked across the table with swimming eyes, but she said nothing.

“Now, then, I have hurt you by my words, and you came here to get some comfort. But you are a brave girl. You can look unflinchingly at the truth. You do not want comfort at the sacrifice of principle or truth. Peace will come at the end of every good fight, rest and happiness will follow every valiant struggle. Your faith, your love will carry you through.”

“But, but— —”

“I know; you are thinking of Halvor Steen. He at present is angry with you. If he loves you, that will soon pass. If he wants you, he will place himself in a position to get you. If he doesn't love you enough to sacrifice a vain pride, or in fact, anything and everything other than truth and right, you do not want him to be your mate for time and eternity. Think of that, my dear young sister. I wish all our girls would think of that more. The gospel gives us such glorious ideals of what the future will be. How can our sisters be satisfied with anything but the noblest and the best in us?”

“Shall I give up Halvor Steen?”

“No, no; the fight is hardly begun. You are a woman, and he is a stubborn man; but you have the advantage in that you have a right to the ministrations of the Holy Ghost, and He

will give you keener insight, better judgment, greater strength. Be wise, do not compromise yourself or the truth, but give Halvor no occasion to think your joining the Church has made any difference in your feelings toward him."

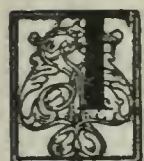
"Thank you very much for your advice. I shall try to follow it. Now, do you think it would be wise for me to call at Strand on my way home and visit with Frue Steen? I have promised, but—"

The President thought for a moment before he said, "Wait a few days. There is no hurry about your going home. If your friend with whom you are staying makes it unpleasant for you, let me know and I shall find you a comfortable place with one of our sisters. Yes, I should say, call at Strand."

"Now thank you again." She arose to go. At the door he took her hand. "God bless you," he said—"and I bless you!" His lips moved as if in silent prayer for her. Then he smiled up into her face, and a sweet joy welled into her heart as she left him standing in the doorway and passed quietly down the stairs.

CHAPTER XV.

ATELIA DEALS WITH THREE SITUATIONS.



THE very next day Atelia received a letter from Halvor's mother, inviting her to call and spend at least a week with them.

One more day she lingered in Christiania with the Saints and Elders, then she took the train for Strand.

As she had not notified them of her coming, no one was at the station to meet her. Knowing Frue Steen's opinion on the right form in such matters, she was driven to the Steen residence in a carriage.

The mother welcomed her warmly. She was a finely preserved woman who carried her gray head high. She was of the few "best families" of democratic Norway who prided themselves on not belonging to the common people.

"Halvor is not at home today, but I'll do my best until he comes," said the mother pleasantly. "We two shall get along nicely."

"I am sure we shall."

Halvor Steen was a fish buyer for a number of firms in Skien and Christiania, and his business took him from home on trips up the coast. The day after Atelia's arrival he came home. He appeared to be very glad to see her, chatted with her pleasantly, but there was no

more love making. He did not seem inclined to follow up the beginning he had made in the train on the way to Christiania; and, truth to tell, Atelia was better pleased that things should go along slowly at present. In their chats around the dinner table, the subject of religion was not broached, and it seemed to Atelia from discernable indications that Halvor and his mother had agreed on this course. How much he had told his mother, she did not know. If the mother knew of her guest's relations with the Mormons, she bore her knowledge with much care.

However, on the third afternoon of her visit, after Halvor had bade her goodby until the next day, Atelia was told by Frue Steen that they were to have Pastor Fjelbo for supper that evening. Atelia wondered whether there was a purpose in this visit, other than the regular call of the pastor on the members of his flock. Her fears were confirmed when the mother continued:

"My dear, I hope you will not be offended at anything the pastor might say. He has heard of your interest in these Latter-day Saints, and so I have invited him to call and have a talk with you."

Atelia winced, but managed nicely to hide her annoyance. "I am sure I shall not be offended, she replied. "He is a gentleman, I suppose."

"Oh, a very fine man, and so learned. You would do well to listen carefully to him."

“I am always open to instruction, Frue Steen. I hope I never shall get too old or too bigoted to learn.”

“That’s right, my dear.”

Pastor Fjelbo came promptly on time. He was not an old man, was very pleasant in manner and speech, and during the dinner, he talked of boat racing, ski running, and other “innocent pleasures.” Atelia noted with interest his maneuvering to get around to the subject he had in hand. But it was clumsily done, and he was not warned of the rough water on the sea of religious controversy on which he was about to embark.

“The other evening,” he began at the close of the eating, “I attended a lecture given by a friend of mine on Utah and the Mormons. He has visited Utah, and he found a bad state of things there.”

“Indeed,” exclaimed Frue Steen.

“Yes; I am sorry that some of our people are being deluded. I hope Pastor Mortensen will be successful in his good work of exposing the Mormon propaganda.”

Atelia felt her ears burn, and she was sure her cheeks were scarlet; but she controlled herself.

“Did you say Pastor Mortensen had personally visited Utah?” asked the mother.

“Yes; and that makes his testimony reliable.”

He has written a book, which, I am glad to say, is having a large sale."

"And therefore making Pastor Mortensen a nice sum of money," added Atelia in as calm a tone as she could command.

"He deserves success in such a worthy undertaking, I am sure," said the pastor. "Now, don't you think so, Froken Heldman?"

"I have read his book," answered the young woman, "and my opinion is that it was written to cater to a popular clamor against a much misunderstood and misrepresented people rather than to tell the truth."

"Atelia!" exclaimed Frue Steen in protest.

"It is full of absurd stories which I am surprised that any intelligent Norwegian should believe."

"For instance—" suggested the Pastor.

"Did you ever, pastor, look at the map of the United States, and note where Utah is located—surrounded on every side by other states, all of which are inhabited by Christian people. Do you think for a moment that the United States government would allow murders to be committed, as daily occurrences, the government mail service to be tampered with, and a general condition of anarchy to prevail—all caused by a handful of people within its borders? Such stories are silly if they were not so despicable!"

Atelia was aroused. Let the traducers of her

people beware. The Pastor reddened for a moment, while Frue Steen was shocked.

"We must believe what a man says he has seen with his own eyes, Froken Heldman," urged the pastor.

"We must believe nothing of the kind, if he tells lies—and I know there are lies in Pastor Mortensen's book. I know the Mormon people, I know what they teach. Have you, Pastor, ever read a book written by a Mormon explaining Mormonism?"

"No—I can't say I have—but—" The wind was a little strong for sailing further in that direction, so the Pastor changed his course. "I was acquainted with your father," he said; "also your old pastor up in Heimstad district. You remember him, I dare say?"

"Oh, yes; he was a good man in his way, and I respect him even if his preaching was not what one might wish."

"He taught you the catechism and confirmed you, did he not?"

"Yes."

"Well, the recollection of these days, and the influence of these teachings ought to be with you yet."

"They are." Atelia had composed herself again. "The good I learned in my childhood, I hope will always remain with me. The false teachings I received, I want to forget."

“And so you think you were not taught the truth?”

“Not in all things. Because our fathers, and their fathers before them believed a certain system of theology to be true doesn't make it true. If age makes truth, then we should all be Roman Catholics, or heathens, if we go further back in time.”

Frue Steen had arisen, and stood very much chagrined at what was taking place. “Will you not have another cup of coffee, pastor,” she asked, as if to make a break in this unpleasantness. The Pastor declined.

“You seem to be well informed on everything Mormon,” said the Pastor to Atelia. “Perhaps you can tell me how the Mormons have added new scriptures to the Christian Bible.”

“With pleasure. We—the Mormons believe the Bible as strongly as any Christian people; but they also believe that God can and has revealed more of his word in our day. Here is the good old Luther's catechism which we studied at school.” She picked up the little brown book from the table and opened it. “On the first page I read this: ‘The Bible was written by prophets, apostles, and other holy men whom God inspired.’ That's true—we all believe that. The Bible says further that these scripture writers wrote as they were moved upon by the Spirit of God. Now, do we have in our day any good men who are moved upon by the Spirit of God?”

She paused, but the others did not reply.

“If we have, and they write under that influence, why is not that as much the word of God as if it were written a thousand years ago?” She looked at the Pastor for a reply.

“I am not bound to reply to your foolish questions, I hope.”

“I beg your pardon, Pastor, for doing all the preaching.” She laughed as if she too wished to close the discussion. “Shall I tell you about these other Mormon scriptures?”

“Not at all, Froken Heldman.” He arose. “Now I must be going,” he said to Frue Steen, who without any remonstrance, fetched his hat and stick. He bade a formal good-day to Atelia. Frue Steen went with him to the door, remained there for a few minutes talking, then she came back to Atelia who had seated herself on the sofa, awaiting results.

“Atelia,” said Frue Steen, her face pale with anger, “what possessed you to insult the Pastor like that? Why did you defend the Mormons? What are they to you?.... the scum of the earth! Answer me!.... It’s a disgrace....”

Atelia must now control herself. The other woman stood before her in high rage. Stoop, Atelia, stoop to conquer.

“I invited him here,—and to receive such treatment—in my own house! What are you that you should set yourself up as a judge of religion and our ministers? The Mormons—!” this last

with the finest scorn of which the angry woman was capable.

"I am sorry, Frue Steen."

"You are not sorry. You glory in what you did. Are you—are you a Mormon? Surely not," she fairly gasped, as the thought came to her.

"I am Atelia Heldman, daughter of Captain Heldman. What matters it to what church I belong?"

"Much to me. A Mormon would disgrace my house."

"All right, Frue Steen," said Atelia, as she arose, "I shall leave immediately."

"Are you a Mormon, then?"

"I am!"

The woman sank into a chair as if she had received a mortal wound. She moaned and wrung her hands. Atelia stood looking at her for a moment, then went up to her as if she wanted to help her; but in what way she knew not. Atelia's anger was gone. She was sorry, and her heart ached not only for this woman, but for some one else; as she stood there, not knowing just what to say or do, she did not forget that a Mormon was disgracing the house.

"I had better get my things and go," said the girl.

"No, no; I didn't mean that—I—I—You must not leave like this. You are Halvor's guest as well as mine. You must stay until he comes back. Poor boy!"

Poor boy! What did that mean? That her son should be entangled in the meshes of a vile Mormon? That did hurt. To have become righteously angry then, and to have walked out of the house with high head, would have been the easier thing to do. But Atelia was not to do the easier things, but the right things, the wise things, no matter how hard they might be. One never repents of not showing one's anger. Temper is a good thing, keep it. Atelia swallowed the "lump in her throat."

"I'll go up to my room now," said Atelia. "Halvor will be home tomorrow, and I'll not leave until he gets back, if you wish it that way."

Nothing more was said. Atelia came down again before going to bed, but as Frue Steen had retired, she walked for half an hour in the rear garden.

Halvor got home early next morning. In fact, he walked in while his mother and Atelia were eating a late breakfast. He was in fine spirits, and chatted pleasantly, telling of some interesting experiences of his trip.

"And, Atelia," he said, I believe I have found a buyer for your boat. I fell in with an Englishman who saw that race at Langesund, and when I showed him a picture of the winner, he became very much interested. He wanted to know your name, where you lived, and the price of 'The

Blue Bird.'—Mother aren't you well this morning?"

After breakfast Atelia and Halvor walked out into the garden. The morning was bright and clear. There had been a touch of frost during the night, and the leaves were falling. As the two reached the summer house at the foot of the garden, Atelia sat down and asked Halvor to take the seat on the other side of the rustic table.

"I want to talk with you, if you have time," she said.

"I have all the time there is this morning."

"Halvor, why did your mother invite me here?"

"Because I asked her to."

"But you did not tell her I had joined the Mormon Church."

"No; I did not. I did not think that was necessary."

"Of course she knew I associated with Mormons, and attended their meetings."

"Yes; she knew that."

"Well, yesterday she asked Pastor Fjelbo to dinner. He attacked the Mormons, and I defended them. Your mother became very angry at me, saying that a Mormon would disgrace her house."

"Surely mother didn't say that."

"In her anger, she hardly knew what she was doing; and that was before I told her I was a member of the Church. That is what

is the matter with your mother this morning. So I had better leave as soon as possible."

Halvor's face was a puzzle, as he looked out through the vines to the river, and his fingers nervously tapped the table.

"But, Atelia, you do not know what this means to me," he said, turning to her. "I don't know what to say or do. I am at sea. I don't understand you, and I lay it to your becoming a Mormon. I can't help that thought, and that doesn't promote any good feeling in my heart towards the Mormon Church and its Elders. Atelia, the Mormon Church has crowded me out of your heart!"

"No, Halvor; it hasn't, it hasn't."

"It seems so to me. I'll admit I was interested in some of the Mormon teachings, but now I can't get rid of a hard feeling against the name."

"You must get rid of that, Halvor. The Church is your best friend, and the Elders would do anything to help you."

"Even to the taking away of one that I have given my whole heart to?" he replied with a touch of bitterness. . . . "Don't go, Atelia. Stay here, stay with me!" He reached across the table and took her hand. "I must have you—I can't give you up!"

"You need not give me up, Halvor. I have not changed. I feel just as I always have—just as I told you the other day."

"You love me, yet cannot promise to marry

me; and you expect me to be satisfied with such an unsolved riddle....”

“I don’t expect you to be satisfied.”

“Then in the name of heaven, Atelia, what do you expect, what do you mean? Don’t drive me mad.”

Atelia again needed to draw upon all the reserve strength she could muster to keep herself in hand and meet this outburst.

“You draw me on with your sweet beauty, with your smile and words of love. Is it to bring me to destruction? You hold my heart only to crush it. I cannot hate you, my Atelia, my sweetheart—yes, God in Heaven, I have tried even that, but failed.”

She suffered with him, but he did not know it. Oh, why couldn’t she step around to him, sink into his embrace, and promise anything he might ask? Would that help him? For the moment, only. She knew that. Permanent peace rests on broad, deep foundations, and such a structure takes time and labor to build. The scene in the office in Christiania came to her in brief vision, and through her dim eyes she saw the assuring face of the President.

Halvor withdrew his hand, arose as if his case were hopeless and he might as well go.

“Let us not quarrel, Halvor,” she pleaded.

“No; we shall not quarrel. It takes two to quarrel, and you will not even do that.” He stood as if about to leave her.

Should she tell him frankly why she could not promise to marry him? What would he think, what would he say if she should tell him that she could not marry any man who did not have the same faith, the same hope of eternal life that she had.—Her husband must be able to go with her, or else wherein the value of love that is eternal. Should she tell him? . . . No; it would not do. Not for a moment must she suggest that he must become a Mormon. If he is the man she thinks he is, he would resent that. Conversion to a religious faith must come from within, with no ulterior motive. She would have to hold her peace and rest her case with the Lord.

With no further words from either of them, they walked quietly back to the house, and he went to his office with no demonstrations of word or act. Frue Steen had little to say all morning. Atelia concluded it would be best for her to leave. Within an hour she could be ready. There was a train shortly before noon. As she was waiting for the carriage which she had ordered, she called Halvor over the telephone, and told him that she was about to leave. He would meet her at the station, he said, and hung up before she could say more.

He was at the station; and as the train came in, he helped her to a seat. He had but a moment to take her hand and say goodby. As the train moved off, she waved to him through the window, and he gallantly stood with uncovered head, until the cars disappeared around a curve.

CHAPTER XVI.

ATELIA'S WORLD.



HE steam heat, newly installed in the hotel, was oppressive, so Halvor Steen had opened the window, and he sat by it looking out on the people in Karl Johan Street. The winter had come in earnest, it seemed, for the air was full of flying snow. Halvor looked up to where the big white flakes came from out a dark upper region, scurried for a moment in the air, then fell into the slush of the busy street. It was nearly ten o'clock, and yet some of the street lamps were burning. It was a miserable morning, in harmony, the young man thought, with his own feelings.

The business which had brought him to Christiania could not be attended to until later in the afternoon, so he had most of the day to spend in idleness. He tried to read, but the light was bad, and—well, any and all excuses suffice for a man who is out of sorts. So what seemed to please him most was to sit at the open window and look at the moving crowds below.

For nearly a month now Halvor had been separated from Atelia. Since she had left him at the station in Strand, he had received only

one small note from her, telling him of her safe arrival home. He had answered that note with one as brief, and that had been the end of their correspondence. Was this also to be the end of all else between them, Halvor wondered that morning. It seemed so. And yet, he could not get his mind fixed on such an ending—his heart would not let him; for his heart still resisted when stern reason would seem to have its way.

After Atelia's visit, Frue Steen had talked emphatically to her son on the foolishness of his making any binding alliance with a Mormon, pointing out to him what it would mean socially, politically, and perhaps in a business way; and Halvor had listened to his mother. Not that he was convinced by her talk, but he thought that perhaps it was the wisest way to wait and let time develop some way out of his difficulty. He would keep away from Atelia, and see what effect such a course might have on his feelings. He wanted to test himself in some sort of way; but to tell the truth, he was far from satisfied with himself by the course he had taken. Do what he would, Atelia Heldman was with him still.

What was she doing on this wintry morning? Heimstad was a lonesome place in winter; and she had few whom she could associate with at this dreary season of the year. In his mind he saw Heimstad in the glory of its summer dress,

and the young girl, its mistress, the life and light of the picture. Atelia had been Halvor's only sweetheart. No girl had ever seriously "bothered" him until she came into his life. Then there was something different. Their mutual liking for out-door sport had led them on to the fjords and into the hills. They had matched their skill more than once before that final big race of last summer, in small sailing skiffs upon Thorvand. At the oars, Atelia was just as skillful as he, and her strong, firm muscles held their own very well against his bigger and stronger ones. In winter, these two had glided together over the ice, and had made many a flying leap on "Ski" over and into snow-drifts!..

Halvor drew back from the window of his hotel. He didn't care to see any more of the crowd; but the room was close, and he could not stand the oppressive heat, so he donned his coat and hat and went out. The snow had ceased, and it seemed as if the storm might break. He would get out for a walk by himself away from the people, but to do so he would have to traverse Karl Johan for a block or two. Just as he reached a point opposite to the art store where he remembered having seen the photograph of Atelia as the central figure of "Norden," he stopped and crossed the street. The picture which Atelia herself had seen was still there, and Halvor stood looking at it, his thirsting soul drinking in its beauty. Was she not in fact

looking for him from under that shading hand? Was there not a mute pleading for him in those rosy child-lips? Never before had that sweet face mirrored itself so distinctly in his heart; and yet for these many days he had been satisfied to remain away from her—no, not satisfied, he could not, would not try to deceive himself longer. He would go to her, ask her forgiveness, promise anything, not vex her with questions which she could not answer, but be content to be with her and know that she loved him.

“Atelia,” he breathed softly as he looked at her picture through the window.

Halvor turned, walked hurriedly up the street to the Palace Park. The trees were laden with snow. The sentry was pacing back and forth, going through the form of protecting the royal precincts. Halvor stopped. He did not now care for a walk in the country. Something “pulled” him back; and as he gave way to this something, and retraced his steps, he wondered what it meant. Where should he go?

“To Osterhaus 27.”

Halvor turned. How foolish; no one spoke! but the “pull” was toward Osterhaus 27,—the Mormon headquarters. Well, he might as well go there as anywhere else.

Halvor would take another look at the picture; but just as that thought came to him, he saw the Mormon President hurriedly cross the street,

look for a moment at the picture in the art store, then walk towards him. He carried a basket as if he had been shopping, and was taking his goods home. The President would not have seen Halvor had not the young man stopped and greeted him with a good morning.

"Well, well, said the President—"yes, I know you, and I am glad to see you. Rather bad morning for walking, isn't it?"

"Are you going home? if so, I'll walk along with you," said Halvor.

"Yes, but by a round-about way. If you don't mind walking a bit, I shall be glad to have your company. You don't mind the basket?"

"Why should I? I'm not carrying it. Is it heavy?"

"Oh, no; but it isn't quite the correct form, you know, for a man to be carrying a basket of bread on Karl Johan; but I have to cross the street to get to my destination."

"But you do not have to stop and look at the pictures of pretty girls in the windows."

"Well, now, did you see me do that?" The President looked at Halvor and laughed guiltily.

"Oh, I don't blame you. I've just had a long look at it myself. It's worth looking at."

The President agreed. Then he explained, as they were walking along, that he was calling on a poor family to give them some bread and butter. "When these people come to us with a tale of woe, and want to borrow money, I in-

quire into their condition, and if I find that they really need something to eat, I take bread and butter to them instead of giving them money. I think I can spend money to a better advantage than they, and I tell them they can live on such good bread and butter as we have here for a long time; and besides, which is more important—though I can't make them understand—they can keep out of debt."

Halvor thought the President's plan a wise one. They soon reached a poor section of the city, and the President left Halvor for a moment while he climbed to the top story of a building to deliver his provisions. He returned in a very short time, and said:

"I'm through for this morning. Now, will you walk home with me? I think you want to talk to me about that beautiful picture in the window; and I shall be pleased to listen."

That discerning President! However, nothing pertinent was said until the President had led Halvor into the office in Osterhaus 27, had given him a chair by the table, had replenished the stove, and then had drawn his own chair opposite the young man. Some weeks before, Atelia had been seated exactly as Halvor was now.

"Now," began the President somewhat abruptly, "how is that young lady friend of yours?"

"To tell you the truth, I do not know. I—I thought you might tell me something about her."

"No; I have heard very little; only a few days ago she sent to this office for a bundle of tracts. She was going out as a missionary, she said, and would need them."

"As a missionary!"

"Oh, that was some of her good humor. She, I understood from her short letter, was going to visit her mother's people up the coast; and the tracts were for them, no doubt."

"Has she gone yet, do you think?"

"That I do not know. You should know."

"Yes; I should. I'll confess my sins to you, President, that I have foolishly neglected Atelia."

"A better girl never lived, Hr. Steen; and as for her loveliness—well, what more do you want?"

"What more indeed!.... I don't understand Atelia. She is quite a puzzle to me. I—I wonder if you might help me in this. Somehow, I feel as though you could. In fact, I was on the way to see you when we met on Karl Johan.... Well, I might as well tell you that Atelia and I have spoken our love to each other, but somehow she has gone out of my reach, there seems to be a barrier between us; and yet I cannot define it, I can't tell what it is."

"It isn't her fault—that is, she hasn't been indifferent, or anything like that?"

"Oh, no; quite the contrary." He knew he could say that much truthfully.

"Then, as there are but two factors in this problem of yours, and Atelia being one of them

and not to blame, where does the fault lie?"

Halvor seemed unable to answer this satisfactorily. He was not sure that he was to blame altogether.

"Let me tell you a little story," continued the President. "Once upon a time a young man and a young woman were in love with each other. They told each other of their love, and were very happy. One day the woman discovered the entrance to a very beautiful park, which park was itself only the beginning of a celestial world, full of life and light and beauty. She learned that the tree of life was in this new land which she had discovered, the fruit of which would make her wise unto salvation and give her life eternal along with all of God's redeemed, among whom she counted her father and mother and many other dear ones. It took a little courage for any one to enter this gate to this land, for the gate was not in form and appearance just what the world called the proper thing. In fact, there was a reproach attached to those who entered. Yet this woman did enter, and when she had seen the beauty within, she beckoned her lover to come also; but he refused. 'Come, just examine into this matter closely,' she said, and you will discover that what appears bad is not bad at all; but he still refused; he would not even investigate,—but there, I'm a poor story teller, and I've got to the end of my resources."

Halvor Steen understood well enough the in-

terpretation of the President's story. The Mormon Church was this beautiful land. He resented in his feelings this preachment, but he could not on the moment frame a reply.

"Now, never mind the story," said the President; "it, no doubt, is a poor one. Let me talk to you in plain words. Shall I?"

"Yes; I wish you would."

"You said just now that there seemed to be some indefinable gulf between you and Atelia. Very likely there is. Have you ever thought what a wonderful creature man is, in that he may live in places other than where his body is. For instance, a man with a book may visit with Livingston in the heart of Africa or may go with Nansen to the Arctic regions. The mind is the man, and the mind may live with Napoleon in his camp or with the lovers in their garden. In thought, one may live over the past and anticipate the future. In short, man's life is largely what his thoughts are. Now, friend Halvor, what have you done to get near to where Atelia Heldman lives?"

Halvor's conscience did prick him a little at this. "Very little, I fear," he replied.

"Atelia is a Latter-day Saint. As such her ideals are different to the world's. Listen! love to her has become, by the added light which she has received, not only a most beautiful, but a most glorious, powerful, eternal principle. The love of lovers consummated in the love of husband

and wife is not narrowed to the few years of this earth-life; but it extends to the eternal worlds, going on and on, growing stronger, more beautiful, more glorious as the ages roll by. I doubt not, my friend, that in such a world of love Atelia lives even now, and I ask again, what have you done to bridge the gulf between that world and the one in which you live?"

"Do you mean that I also should become a Mormon?"

"I mean that if I loved a woman as you love Atelia, I would try my very best to get to her—to get to the world she lives in."

"That is, I repeat, become a Mormon."

The President looked more keenly at his visitor than he had so far done during the interview as he asked:

"What is it to become a Mormon, as you put it?"

"Why, I understand one must be baptized by immersion."

"I could take you to Aker river and baptize you fifty times without making a Latter-day Saint out of you."

"Then perhaps I don't understand."

"Baptism in water is an outward ordinance. Enrolling one's name in a book is a form. Going to a church is an action of the mortal body. Have not I been trying to tell you that the world Atelia lives in is a spiritual one, and any one who wishes to get into that world must

enter the gate in 'spirit and in truth.' Atelia's beautiful face and form is in Norway somewhere, either at Heimstad or up the coast. You can go to her, feel the gentle pressure of her hand, and look on that fair face, but the only way you can live where she lives is to enter her world."

"Why could she not come back to my world?"

"She could; that, of course is possible."

"True love is capable of sacrifice to the uttermost, is it not?"

"Sometimes what is called true love is very near-sighted, sometimes very foolish; sometimes sacrifices are made that are to no purpose. Now, just suppose Atelia should come to you and say, 'Halvor, I'll give up living in my world. I'll go with you, because I love you so. I can't live without you, therefore I'll sacrifice everything for our love!' What would it profit? What would she gain if she got you and the whole world thrown in, if she lost her soul?"

"I can think it possible that one would be willing to go to hell for eternity for just the privilege of loving for a short time."

"That's a story-book notion. It's foundation rests on falsehood and deception. True, men risk their hopes of salvation to satisfy some depraved passion or appetite; but don't say love will do that. Love is of God; love will prompt no one to do that which will be for one's eternal loss." The President was conscious of repeating

to this man somewhat the same as he had told the woman, sitting some time ago in the same place. Perhaps both of them needed the same teaching.

“Yes;” agreed Halvor, “I’ll admit that the heaven for a minute, hell for eternity idea never has appealed to me; but tell me why should not a marriage based on true love extend to eternity?”

“It should; and it will if done by the proper authority and in the right way. Let me read to you a little from a book containing the revelations of the Lord to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith.” The President went to his desk for the book, opened it and read:

“Everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me, or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God;’

“For whatsoever things remain, are by me; and whatsoever are not by me, shall be shaken and destroyed.’

“Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me, nor by my word; and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world, and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the

world; therefore they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world;'

" 'Therefore, when they are out of the world, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but they are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister to those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory;'

" 'For these angels did not abide my law, therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity, and from henceforth are not Gods, but are angels of God, for ever and ever.' "

"This is the law as we are taught it," said the President.

Halvor sat in deep thought; nor did he speak until the President got up, went to the stove to adjust the drafts, and then resumed his seat.

"Do I understand," asked Halvor, "that the highest place in heaven is reserved for those who are married—married, of course, in a way that would preserve that state in the next world?"

"I know not how deeply the doctrine of an unsexed heaven has become grounded in your religious belief," replied the President; "but let me tell you that sex is not limited to earth-life: it is eternal, endless, and an attribute of God. We, as God's children, inherit it from Him. 'Let us make man in our own image,' said the Creator.

'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.' Where there is a father, there must be a mother and children; where there is a husband, there must be a wife—but let me read a little further from the revelation:

“‘And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is annointed, unto whom I have appointed this power, and the keys of this Priesthood; and it shall be said unto them, ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection; and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths—then shall it be written in the Lamb's Book of Life that he shall commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, and if he abide in my covenant. . . . it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity, and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the Gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and their glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fullness and a continuation of the seeds for ever and ever.’

“‘Then shall they be Gods, because they have

no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject to them. Then shall they be Gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.' " * * * * *

"And all this is what Atelia reads and believes?" asked Halvor.

"This is the world she lives in."

"I can't grasp all this, of course; for it comes as a mighty wave which I cannot stem, even though I would,—a wave which seems to swamp my puny ideas, yet is not destructive, but lifts me up into a wonderful exultation. Though I cannot grasp every detail of what you have been reading, it 'tastes good,' and that is a testimony of its truth, to use an expression of Atelia's. I thank you, President, for the time you have spent with me." He arose to go.

"You have an appointment, I suppose?"

"Yes; but I'm coming again—soon—and every time I get a chance. Meanwhile, have you some books for me to read?"

"I have—and I am glad to see you are going to prepare yourself, like a true knight, to follow your lady-love whither she leads, at least, to spy out the land and watch for any dangers. She must be lonesome, waiting for you, yes, and suffering the pangs of doubt and anxiety whether or not you will ever come. Remember, as she remembers, that 'the man is not without the

woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.' ”

“Suppose I never see the way,—suppose—”

“Ah, but you will, Halvor; pray God that He will show you the way. I have faith in you that you will win, and that Atelia, that brave daughter of the north will also win. Goodby now, and God bless you—come again.”

They walked down the stairs together, and again said farewell on the sidewalk where they parted.

CHAPTER XVII.

THINGS TO BE PRESERVED AND THINGS TO BE DESTROYED.



ONE of the compensations of so-called bad weather is that one may with more content stay at home and do some of the many things which are neglected because of out-door activities. Thus it was with Heimstad and Atelia that day. For weeks after her return from her visit to Strand, there had been glorious fall weather, and she had spent much of her time out of doors: she felt as though she must move in the open; there was more escape for pent-up feeling in forest, on hill, and lake.

But today the rain was accompanied with a cold wind. The fire in the big dining room felt good. Atelia, after luncheon, seeing that there was no prospects of fair weather that day, had gone up to her room, and had carried down a large box full to overflowing of her "things." What these "things" consisted of would take a good-sized list to tell; but as every daughter, north or south, knows what they are, there is no need of going into particulars here.

Atelia, seated on the floor by the box, first

sorted its contents into things to be preserved and things to be destroyed. As this process always requires careful discrimination, she was a long time in emptying the box. When she came to her letters, which she left to the last, she made slow progress, for she would have to read a good many of them before she could decide on which pile to place them. Halvor's letters were tied in a bundle by themselves. She reserved them to the very last. It was not a large bundle, for Halvor had never been lavish or lengthy in his letter-writing. The briefest of them all was the last, a very fitting tapering off, it occurred to Atelia. Goodby is a short word,—but oh, the long time afterward!

Atelia took her bundle to the window to the better light. She opened and read a number of the letters. Which pile should these go into? Was it worth while to preserve these reminders of the past? If kept, would they not open anew wounds which time would heal? She had best throw them in the fire, the whole bundle, just as they are, without further examination; but as she was saying this in her heart, her fingers were tying them up carefully again. They lay on her lap, as she looked out of the window to the rain-washed country without.

Olga came to the door and spoke; but Atelia apparently did not hear. The girl repeated.

“What is it, Olga?” asked Atelia, going back to the confusion on the floor.

"Elder Larsen is here with some people, and he wishes to see you."

"Oh, tell him I'll be out immediately." She hurriedly replaced the contents of her box, paying little regard to things to be destroyed and things to be preserved, then shoved the box into a corner. She found Elder Larsen in the kitchen, and greeted him warmly.

"You are wet," she exclaimed. "Have you been out in this storm?"

"Only a little while." He turned to the man and the woman who were with him. "These," said he to Atelia, "are Brother and Sister Bonden. They are wet, and will you kindly let them change their clothing for the dry ones in their bundles?"

"Why, of course; and I am very glad to know you," she said as she shook them by the hand, and sent them out with Olga. "But, Elder Larsen, what does this mean?"

The missionary was far from miserable over his wetting; in fact he seemed to be happy, chuckling merrily as he explained.

"You see," he said, "Brother and Sister Bonden are two converts from Telemarken. I have been touring that part again. When I got ready to leave these people, they said they were going with me. They were going to Skien, anyway, they claimed. So we took boat together. You can't imagine how I felt, Atelia."—His voice lowered and became very gentle as he went on.

—“I was reminded how the people could not be made to go their own way again when they had heard the Master’s voice, but would follow Him like children. These two honest souls have the same spirit, and this incident has filled my heart.”....

“But how came they to be so wet?”

“I’ll explain. I did not know Sister Nordo was living here with you, so we went up to her house. Finding it deserted and closed, the only thing I could do was to come here. We walked over the hill, and got a good soaking, of course. As you know, the road dips down to Thorvand, and when we got to that place, Brother Bonden stopped. ‘See, here is water,’ said he; ‘what doeth hinder me to be baptized?’ ‘And I too,’ said the woman. All the time these two people had the thought of being baptized in mind, and had prepared their bundles of clothing for the purpose, but had said nothing about it until now. They were both already as wet as they well could be, and I told them if that was what they desired, I would baptize them in Thorvand. And I did.”

“In the clothes they walked in?”

“Yes; those in their bundles were not so good, but they are much dryer, and that will explain their somewhat odd apparel when they reappear.”

The chuckle had come back to Elder Larsen’s tone, and Atelia also smiled at the oddity of the affair. Then she became busy. She found

some clothing of her father's for Elder Larsen, and sent Olga to Sister Bonden with other needed things. Sister Nordo took a motherly hand with the woman, and in a short time they all gathered in the big dining room and were getting better acquainted.

That evening after the visitors had been warmed and well fed, a little confirmation meeting was held. The peaceful Spirit of the Lord was poured out in abundance on them as these "two or three" were gathered together in the name of the Lord.

"I have recently been reading," said Elder Larsen, "a little of Norse mythology, and as I always try to interpret everything by the light of the gospel, I find some wonderful suggestions in the tales and sages of our old mother-land. There seems to be some foundation of truth in the gods and goddesses of our forefathers."

"I think there is," said Brother Bonden. "The fundamental element in their mythology was a religious one. They were trying to find the 'unknown God' in nature around them. Some writers on Norse mythology have pointed out the probability of this mythology having its origin in the true religion which was revealed to man in the earliest period of human history. As one writer puts it: 'The Edda has descended to us through the ages, growing, like all tradition, continually darker, and accumulating lower matter and more divergent and more pagan doctrines

as the walls of old castles become covered with old mosses and lichens, till it finally assumed the form in which it was collected from the mouths of the people and put in a permanent written form.' What do you think of that, Elder Larsen?"

"That is probable. We know that the gospel was revealed to Adam and others in the beginning of the race. Why should not some of its truths have filtered down through the ages?"

"And one of the fundamental truths is that there are Gods ruling and reigning in the universe in whose image and likeness we mortals have been made."

"We have scripture for that," added Atelia.

"Paul tells us we are the offspring of God," said Elder Larsen.

"Therefore," Brother Bonden concluded, "we are destined to become like Him. This truth has been, as it were, in the background of my thoughts for a long time, but I could not express it intelligently until Elder Larsen came along with the 'Key of Knowledge' which opened the door."

It was at this point in the little meeting that Atelia said to the maid, who was sitting with them around the table:

"Olga, something seems to be burning in the kitchen. Go and see."

Olga arose, went the length of the hall to the back kitchen. Because of the cold, all the doors

were closed. When she opened the kitchen door, the draft must have fanned into a blaze the smouldering fire in the woodwork of the floor, for the girl drew back with a shriek which rang through the house and startled the inmates sitting quietly in the dining room. The flames seemed to reach after the girl as she ran back.

“What is it, Olga?”

“Fire! fire; the house is on fire!” screamed the girl.

All rushed into the hall-way. From the rear kitchen doorway came billows of smoke, followed by tongues of flame. The women stood for a moment terrorized. The two men asked each other what best to do.

“Atelia,” said Elder Larsen, “where is there water?”

“Only in the well—here, I’ll show you.”

She was about to rush down the hall through the smoke, when Elder Larsen seized her arm. “No; you can’t get out that way. We must go around by the front.”

Out of the front door they ran, the others following. The well was at the rear, and some distance away, and a bucket was all that could be used. By the time the two men had drawn water enough to fill two pails which the women had brought, the flames were pouring out of the kitchen windows. The water was thrown in through the broken glass, but all could see that it made no perceptible effect on the fire.

“Have you no water-pipes?” Elder Larsen again asked.

“They got out of order three months ago, and we haven’t used them since.”

“I’m afraid,” he said, then went to work again. All hands worked heroically. The rain had nearly ceased, but there was a strong wind which was driving the fire rapidly from the kitchen into the hall and other rooms.

“It’s no use trying to put it out now,” said Brother Bonden. “We had better see if we can save something.” As they paused a moment to look at the burning house, Elder Larsen agreed with him. The old home was doomed. The flames licked the hundred-years old timbers as if greedy to devour their solid substance. The kitchen ceiling fell in with a crash and the flames roared up into Olga’s bed room above.

The little awe-stricken party ran around to the front of the house.

“Is there a ladder?” asked Elder Larsen.

“Yes,” replied Helga as she ran to the “stabur” to fetch it.

Meanwhile, the two men entered the front rooms which were fast filling with smoke, but they managed to get some pictures from the walls and some of the lighter pieces of furniture, and hand them out to the women. Among the things saved was Atelia’s cup which she had won at the regatta. They tried the piano, but found

it too heavy to get out in the limited time they had.

"Is there anything special?" shouted Elder Larsen to Atelia.

"I don't know, Oh, I don't know." Atelia was trying hard to control herself. "Can you get up stairs—my clothes—"

"Here's the ladder," said Helga, as she placed it against the portico.

Brother Bonden sprang up to the porch roof, from which position he entered Atelia's bed room. Elder Larsen followed and received the things as they were handed to him. Bed clothes were tumbled out on to the ground, but Atelia's personal belongings were let down more gently. In this way a good many things were rescued before the smoke became so thick that they could do no more. Then all that could be done was to carry the articles they had secured to a safe distance, and stand helplessly and see Heimstad House burn to the ground.

Atelia Heldman, brave and fearless as she was in many ways, stood with blanched face and looked at the awful sight. Then she sank with a moan on to the pile of bedding. Sister Nordo tried to comfort her, not with useless words, but with supporting arm and caressing touch. There were no near neighbors, but those at a distance who had seen the light in the darkness, now began to arrive. They could do nothing but take their places by the little group

and stand in silent awe to see the huge tongues of red flame leap out of the windows and doors and ravenously eat into the wooden walls, until they became too weak to support the red tiles of the roof, when they came down with a crash. A great cloud of smoke and blazing splinters of wood arose into the air when the roof fell in. Atelia hid her face in Sister Nordo's arms when she saw what was about to happen.

It was well towards midnight before the fire had done its work completely. There were no other buildings near enough to the burning house to be in danger. The capacious barns and hay sheds, once full, were at this time very little in use. They were however, clean and dry, and to these buildings the homeless people moved what they had saved. They made beds on the hay and the women were prevailed upon to lie down and rest. The men kept watch for some time, then towards morning, they also slept for a few hours.

Atelia lay quietly with eyes closed; but she could not sleep. Her heart was full to bursting, and racing through her brain were wild thoughts which seemed beyond her control. Prayer after prayer she sent up to her Father in Heaven, but it was a long time before the peace of heart and rest of mind which came in answer to her prayers could have their way with her. At last these heavenly forces conquered, and just as she

was dropping off to sleep, she seemed to hear a still, small voice whisper to her: "Some things are to be preserved, and some things are to be destroyed." "Yes, yes," she responded in her heart,—“there were Halvor’s letters—some of them I wanted to keep—but now they are all gone—among the things to be destroyed.” Then she fell asleep.

CHAPTER XVIII.

UP THE COAST.



WEEK after Atelia Heldman had witnessed the destruction of Heimstad, she was on board one of the steamers which regularly threads its way along Norway's rugged coast. The long-promised visit to her mother's people was now to be fulfilled.

It was afternoon on board. There was a brisk breeze, and the air was cold with the feeling of coming winter. Well protected by wraps, Atelia sat in a sheltered place on deck.

Atelia was alone on this trip—very fitting it occurred to her that afternoon, for was she not now alone on her journey of life? Sister Nordo and Helga had gone back to their humbler quarters, taking with them what had been saved from the fire, and Olga had to go back to her own people in the uplands of Telemarken. Elder Larsen, and Brother and Sister Bonden had remained for a few days to help, then the former left to go on with his labors, and the two latter to go back home. Heimstad had been insured against fire, and Uncle Sande kindly helped her to see that the settlement was properly under way. So there was now nothing to hold her in the old environment but memories, and from these she wished to escape. Up to the time of

her departure, not a word had been received from Halvor Steen.

The Norwegian west coast is a wonder! To get a correct idea of it as a whole, a detailed map must be studied, on which is shown every promontory, island, and fjord. It seems impossible to have a more rugged mixture of land and water. A personal inspection, such as was had by Atelia that afternoon, will bring out the peculiar grandeur of the scenery.

The distant mountains on the mainland were already covered with snow. The nearer strip of coast land was gray, bare and bleak. The small patches, once green, were now brown, adding their dullness to the gray rock and yellow sand. Fog banks hung over some of the outer islands and projecting headlands. Now the boat went bounding over a rough open sheet of water. The mainland coast receded, only to loom up again right ahead. Then the steamer wound in and out of the interminable maze of islands, through passages sometimes so narrow that a stone might be thrown to either side. The boat passed close under a crag, disturbing great flocks of sea birds, whose cries made a deafening noise. In these cliff-locked passages, the water mirrored the rocks and sky until its smooth surface was broken by the steamer.

When the steamer dropped its anchor opposite a red-roofed town situated at the mouth of a fjord, small boats came darting out, their brawny

occupants vieing with each other for passengers. Big flat-boats lay alongside, and the steamer's hoisting machinery, with much rattling, lifted bales and barrels of fish and deposited them in the hold. A few passengers came and went. Then the anchor was raised, and the steamer headed for an opening in the coast. Here and there groups of fisher huts clung to the rocks. Boats and nets and fish refuse lined the shore. Small strips of brown stubble showed where a few bundles of barley were harvested and a small boat-load of hay was cut. At every small station along this crooked water-way, a boat-man came out with a bag of mail, which he exchanged for another. Perchance a passenger got on or off. Usually a few packages of express were received. Thus on and on in and out went the boat until darkness closed down on sea and land,—and yet the boat sped on.

Atelia liked to see it all, she liked to study the people. She knew they were not many, these descendants of the Northmen, scattered as they are along the barren rocks of the coast, but they are strong in many good things. Honesty and integrity are deep-rooted in them. Plodding and slow they may be, but they wrest an honest living from the sublime barrenness. "If only they could see the gospel light," said Atelia to herself. "Why can they not see it? There are thousands of good, honest souls scattered among these islands and fjords. Would that I were a

man,—and a missionary. Then I might do something.”

She was up early next morning, ready to leave the boat. The larger coast vessels cannot possibly wind in and out to all stations, so the small local routes around islands and up fjords are served by small steamers from some station on the main line. Atelia had to transfer that morning to one of these small boats. The town where she got off had good wharf facilities, so the boat could lay up to the pier. With her trunk and hand baggage by her, she watched the larger boat proceed on its way, and the smaller boat lay up to the landing. She read the name “Viking” on the prow. The captain from the wheel on the steering deck looked at her as if he knew her. When she was comfortably seated amidships, and the little steamer was well under way, the captain gave the wheel in charge of another, and stepped down with cap in hand to his passenger.

“I beg your pardon,” said he; “but are you not Froken Heldman?”

“Yes,” she answered as she looked up to him.

“I thought so. You would not, of course, remember me. I was one of the defeated ones of the Regatta last summer. I was the skipper of the ‘Virga.’

Atelia arose and extended her hand in greeting. “I am glad to meet you,” she said. “And I hope I am forgiven.”

“Entirely. I did not take my defeat so badly as Halvor Steen. I hope he also has forgiven you.”

“I hope so—and so you are the captain of the ‘Viking’ now?”

“Oh, yes; one must make a living, you know. I nose about these islands for my bread and butter; for fun, once in a while, I sail in a race.”

“The ‘Viking’ in you must be satisfied now and then.”

“Exactly, Froken Heldman—but will you not come up to the wheel. I shall have to release my man. You see, our little craft carries but few hands.”

Atelia gladly mounted the steps and took the chair Captain Moen placed for her near where he stood. The morning was beautiful, with clear sky and smooth water. The steamer pointed straight toward a rocky cliff, but when within a few rods, the wheel spun around, and the boat glided in a graceful curve into an opening.

“This is really most enjoyable,” said Atelia. “This coast line is wonderful.”

“Yes; but one gets tired of being hemmed in like this. It’s always a relief to get out in the open. Some day when I become the captain of a trans-Atlantic liner—” He ended his sentence with a merry laugh.

“And why not?”

He did not answer that; but he looked at the book she held in her hand. “Is it interesting?” he asked.

"Yes; very," she held it out to him.

"English—and the Bible. That's a strange combination for a Norwegian girl. Are you studying to be a missionary to the wilds of America?"

"Why shouldn't I read the Bible in English. I want to learn the language and I find the scriptures the easiest reading."

"Let me hear you read."

"I'm a poor scholar."

But he urged, and she opened the book: "'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me!

"'And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.'

"'He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.' What does it mean?" she asked, when she saw that he understood her reading.

They were steaming straight across a wide body of water, into which the sea-waves rolled.

"I am no theologian," answered the captain with eye straight ahead, "but I suppose that in the days of the Savior such sacrifices were necessary. A Christian had to be one thing or another."

"Why isn't that necessary now? Why is it now so easy to get to heaven? Has the road been changed? Has the straight and narrow way

been changed and abandoned for the easy, wide one?"

Captain Moen looked for a moment from the distance to the face of the young woman beside him, and he saw something there that puzzled him. Atelia in her fervor of speech was fearful that she might have betrayed the thought behind her words, so she closed her book, placed it on the deck, and leaned over the railing.

"Where is Skarpen?" she asked.

"Just around that headland you see to the right. We're about half way."

"Does the sea ever get rough here?"

"Do you see that opening to the left? Well, when a good storm comes from the Atlantic through that opening, we may look out. Right ahead you see a big rock standing sheer out of the water. That's Sten island. Between it and the mainland the current is dangerous in bad weather, so we have to go out around. Then we get shaken up a bit."

"But the weather is fine today."

"Oh, yes; don't worry about that. We'll cut right through to Skarpen very nicely today."

In a few minutes the whistle sounded, and as they rounded the inner point of Sten island, they could see Skarpen in the distance. Atelia had been there when a child, and the memory of that time came to her now, and how the boat that came to take her and her mother off had rocked.

Another ten minutes and they slowed up. The anchor dropped, and they were at rest.

"I am very pleased to have met you, Captain Moen. As you pass this way frequently, I shall no doubt see you again," said Atelia.


The captain also expressed his pleasure at the meeting. He stepped down with her, and assisted her with her baggage. "There are your Uncle and two cousins. I believe they have given their boat a new coat of paint for the occasion. And well they might," he added, "when they are to have the honor of rowing to land the best sailor in Norway."

From the door in the iron sides of the steamer, Atelia stepped lightly into her uncle's boat. Her trunk was lifted in, and then they shoved off. She waved her farewell to Captain Moen on the bridge, and he lifted his cap in return. Then she devoted her time to her uncle and the two sturdy fisherman cousins who were pulling at the oars. She enquired about her aunt Maren, the girls, the fishing, and such other things that were of local interest to them.

Quite a little company greeted her on the beach and led her to the house.

CHAPTER XIX.

A VISIT TO SAGA-LAND.

 KARPEN was a fishing village, built on the rocks at the base of a cliff. Every inhabitant was engaged either in catching, or curing, or storing, or selling fish. The men, as a rule, worked on the water; the women on land. Fish was both the support and burden of their lives. Fish and fish refuse greeted the eye everywhere; the smell of fish was in the air, outside as well as in the kitchen.

Atelia entered with keen enjoyment into this new life. Her people had undoubtedly expected to find a "Fine Lady" who would be hard to please with their rough surroundings and fare; but Atelia's fineness was altogether of a different kind than that which shows only on the surface. Her best gowns were carefully put away in cousin Oletta's big trunk, and she dressed in the plainer clothes which harmonized more with her surroundings. She did not play the part of an idle visitor, but helped in the kitchen, with the sewing and mending, and was not averse to rolling up her sleeves and joining her neighbors in disposing of an unusual catch of fish.

A period of fine weather seemed to have come

to the coast; and this led Atelia to ask her uncle if it would not be a wise thing for her to make her visit to another of her relatives who lived up in what was sometimes called an "eagle-nest farm," located on top of the great highland through which the fjord cut a deep chasm. He agreed with her. Could Oletta come with her, she asked. He hesitated at this, but could hardly refuse.

"We'll both work harder when we come back to make up for lost time," she said. "Will we not, Oletta?"

Oletta beamed with delight at the prospect of such a trip. She promised any number of good deeds in return.

So it was decided and a note was sent to Uncle Lars, announcing their coming. Two days later, when the "Viking" dropped anchor near Skarpen, the two girls were ready to go on board. Captain Moen greeted them warmly, and again Atelia with her companion was invited up to the steering box, "better to see the sights," as he put it.

The trip would take them zig-zagging through one of the fjords which extends far into the country. Atelia had never seen Hardanger or Sogn fjords, but she was told that this one would present to her all the grandeur of these larger ones.

"Captain Moen," asked Atelia, "is the weather

bad enough to warrant our going out around Sten island?"

"This is the finest weather we've had for a long time. Do you want to go around?"

"I would like to."

"You want to get a taste of the sea,—the real big sea. Now, isn't that the truth?"

"Yes."

"You want to get away from this land-locked stillness to the sea that is alive; you want to feel that life in its rise and fall; you want to be able to look out into space where sea and sky meet—and so do I;" and with that, Captain Moen gave a swift turn to the wheel. The boat altered its course, its prow pointing directly out for the open sea. Atelia looked curiously at him. "We're going around the outer point of Sten island," he explained.

"Oh, I wasn't in real earnest," she said, "I—"

"But I am. I'm glad you mentioned it. I've wanted something all day, but I couldn't tell what. This is it. This is fine." He sniffed the breeze which the boat had already encountered in its altered course.

When they arrived abreast of the outermost point of Sten island, the view forward was one stretch of unbroken water. The ocean rose and fell in long gentle sweeps, lifting carefully the little steamer, then letting it as carefully down in the troughs.

"If we kept straight on in this way, where would we land?" asked Atelia.

"Iceland, or perhaps Greenland."

"That's too far north."

"I suppose you wouldn't mind if it were some American port?"

"Not at all. I'm going to America, anyway."

"Is that so? When?"

"Oh, not right away," she laughed.

"Well, we're all going some day."

As the steamer rounded the point and changed its course back to the fjord, Captain Moen explained to the girls the nature of the treacherous currents. The high precipitous cliffs of Sten island with the mass of huge boulders at its base would be a bad place for a boat to strike in a storm; but as the weather was fine that day, Captain Moen steered close so that his passengers might get a good look.

But the captain of the "Viking" could not devote all his time to his fair companions. When they had fairly entered the fjord, they steamed from one side to another, touching at the landings and transacting what business was required. The fjord soon narrowed until it seemed the perpendicular walls would meet. Up in the dizzy height, a narrow slit of sun-bathed blue cast a wierd light into the deep shadow through which the boat was slowly throbbing. The silence was so intense that it became painful. Not even a sea-bird's cry echoed between the cliffs. Here,

the water under them was as deep as the mountain walls above them were high. The two girls sat in awed silence on the deck. Here, thought Atelia, is the real saga-land of Norway. No wonder the people in the dim past, living all their lives in such surroundings would people their world with Thor and Baldur and Freya.

Presently, the walls of rock receded, and the watery floor expanded. The mountains were more broken, and there were patches of soil close by the water, half way up the hills, and even on the very top, where there could be seen clusters of houses. Openings at either side of the big main gorge indicated that branches extended into the hills. The steamer sometimes swung into these for a short distance to a hamlet by the water, then turned back into the main water-way. Across a wide arm it plowed and soon it came again into the shadow. Waterfalls leaped from mountain cliff, or spilled down the rugged sides. Away in the dim distance they appeared like puffs of moving blue and white. The walls closed in again, higher than ever. The two girls went up to the captain. In the solemn gloom of saga-land, they seemed to seek for human company.

“How high are these walls?” asked Atelia.

“From three to five thousand feet; and if the fjord were drained and we stood at the bottom, we would have a wall of rock towering above us twice that distance.”

“Good gracious!” exclaimed Oletta.

“Do you see that little gray dot against the dark green mountains?” asked the captain. “Look away up on the distant mountain to your right—do you see it—just above that waterfall?”

“Yes; I see,” said Atelia.

“Well, that’s an eagle-nest farm.”

“What! where we are going? How in the world shall we ever get there?”

“You are good climbers, aren’t you?”

“But that seems a hundred miles away, and up on the very top of the world.”

“Yes; but we shall see presently.”

After a half hour’s sailing in and out of broken waterways, the whistle blew a long blast, and then a short extra one, which indicated special passengers, the captain said. Presently, they glided into a cove, and the steamer lay carefully up to a shelving rock and fastened. Not a house of any kind was in sight. The captain instructed one of his men to take the ladies’ baggage off. Just as they were about to remonstrate, a shout came from away up on the mountain.

“They’re coming,” said the captain.

“Who are?”

“Don’t be frightened. Although, without doubt, this was one of the Vikings’ strongholds, they are long since dead, and I assure you the race which now inhabits these parts are of the meekest and most harmless kind. There is your uncle Lars. I know him. He is a fine fellow,

I envy your visit to his eagle-nest farm. I've been there once or twice myself."

Uncle Lars and a strapping son soon arrived.

"Here are your company," announced the captain. "Take good care of them, and don't let them fall over the cliff."

The uncle thanked the captain in a grave, sober way. He was like the ruggedness about him, and it seemed improbable that he had ever laughed aloud; perhaps, when he had been younger, he had smiled, but that had been so long ago that the memory of it had been forgotten.

The two men gathered up the girls' belongings, and bidding them to follow, led the way up a path which zig-zagged up the mountain. The lowering afternoon sun had left the chasm of the fjord, but it still shone above them. In one of their frequent pauses to rest, which the men solicitously insisted on, they caught a glimpse of the "Viking," which appeared like a toy ship below them. Up, up they climbed; but the girls were strong-limbed and vigorous, and were not far behind the men when they reached the top.

With a good deal of awe they were received by the women folks, for it was a rare thing for city ladies to visit such out of the way places. Some of the younger children had never been away from their mountain home, while the travels of the older ones had been limited to some neighboring farm, perchance across the

great fjord-chasm, or to the semi-yearly visits to the church in the valley below.

The farm house was a large, low-built, timber structure, solid and substantial to withstand the severe winter. About it were clustered half a dozen outbuildings for the housing of stock and fodder. Within the house, in a sort of hall was a wonderful collection of oars, fishing tackle, farm implements, game traps, great fur coats, rawhide boots, heads and antlers, powder horns and shot pouches. The living rooms were large, with timbered sides and smoke-stained ceilings. Every piece of furniture was home made,—long low tables, chairs, huge chests, beds built into and against the wall. Each room had an open fire-place. Shelves rested on wooden pegs driven into the log walls.

The evening meal was soon spread, it being taken for granted that the travelers must be hungry. And what a spread! A sort of vegetable soup, seasoned with bits of dried fish; "flad-brod"; and coarse, heavy black-bread; cheese, three kinds; cream and milk; preserved wild strawberries,—all these in wonderful quantities. White napkins, betraying long contact with odorous herbs in the chest, were placed near the visitors' plates.

As the strangeness to each other wore off, questions regarding the family were asked and answered. The upland folk's dialect was odd to Atelia, but she had no difficulty in under-

standing them. After the eating, the men and the visitors sat by the fireplace, in which a fire had been built. The evenings were getting cold, explained Uncle Lars.

When bed time came, Atelia and Oletta were given another big room, where the bed was built in the recess under the stairs. It was elaborately carved and painted in brilliant colors, and furnished with feather tick and feather quilts. As these good people, in common with their kind, believed that night air and draughts were very dangerous to good health, every opening that would admit any air was carefully and securely closed; and Atelia had difficulty in finding a way to admit a little air.

Atelia awoke early next morning. The sun was not yet up, but there were already signs of work coming from the kitchen. She got up and dressed without awakening her cousin, then slipped out into the open. Frost lay on the grass. Above the forest of pine, which hemmed in the meadows and fields, the heights of solid rock stretched on and upward until the distant mountain peaks were reached, already covered with snow. Not far from the house a stream, clear and cold, splashed in the gray morning on to the edge of the fjord-chasm, where it made a leap and was dashed into spray on the rocks half way down. Atelia stood by the edge, which was protected by a stone wall, and gazed on the wonder-world about her. Presently the sun

shone on a distant peak, then on another, until slowly the whole upper world was bathed in light; but down in the great rift at her feet the shadows were pearly gray, the silvery water-floor of the fjord reflecting but faintly the coming light above it.

It seemed to Atelia Heldman that morning that she stood in quite another world, not quite completed, in the rough, not yet smoothed and finished for human habitation. She might well be in the morning of creation, the freshness of a new-born world in her nostrils. And then her spiritual self was also lifted up, until she was for a moment, carried away by the spirit, and she saw life from its beginning to its end; yes, further than the so-called end, for her vision extended to the eternities. It was then that this young woman rested her clasped hands on the stone wall, closed her eyes, and poured out her gratitude to God. After a time she went back to the house with new life and inspiration for her daily tasks among her people.

And these people needed the new life that Atelia could and did bring. Away from the world, they lived and died in a world by themselves. Many of them had never been to school, but they could read the Bible and the newspaper which came by the tri-weekly mail. Atelia's two girl cousins would not have known the use of puff box or manicure set; but they had strength and primitive beauty which "ladies of

culture" might well envy. Here where life reverted back to first principles, thought Atelia, here should be a field ripe for the gospel.

The long evenings were opportune time for story telling and talk; and Atelia made wise use of such occasions. Uncle Lars was a great Bible reader, so it was not difficult for her to get him reading passages and commenting on them. She asked him questions, which if he failed to answer satisfactorily, she would explain herself. Carefully, without giving offence, she would lead the listening family to see that what the priest had taught them from childhood did not always agree with the Bible in which they trusted so implicitly. The morning after one of these conversations, her boy cousin had boasted to a neighbor that "Atelia knew more scripture than all the priests in the 'bygd.'" Be that as it may, Atelia taught them as one who had received of the light, and was in duty bound to transmit that light to others.

For a week, things went on nicely. Slowly, the warm rays of the gospel penetrated the former coldness of so-called religion, softly and tenderly it coaxed the sleeping life; then the heart relaxed into more receptive mood; under the continuous play of benign rays, there sprang up a new growth. Perchance, thought Atelia, the ground is now ready for the work of a missionary. When I get home, I shall report.

One day Atelia found her cousin Marie, who

spent much of her time in the stable working with the cows, in sore straits.

"What is the matter?" asked Atelia.

"I hate to tell you, cousin. It's about that book you let me take."

"What about it?"

"Well, yesterday I was reading it out here, and I got so interested that I was late with the milking. Mother came out to see what was the matter, and in her anger, she jerked the book out of my hand and threw it into the fire where the water was warming for the cows."

"Oh, is that all? That's nothing to cry about. I can get plenty more books like that. Did you finish the book?"

"Not quite."

"Well, some day I'll see that you do. Are you through milking today? I wish I could help you; but milking is one thing I can't do." Atelia seated herself on the fragrant hay, and asked her cousin to sit by her. "Marie, you do not talk much. Haven't you some fairy tale to tell me, I mean a tale that belongs up here to these mountains and fjords?"

Marie bethought herself a moment. "There is one," she said, "about Snetoppen."

"Tell it to me."

"The saying about here is that right on the tip-top of the snow-clad mountain, there is a little grass plot no larger than a bed. Well, if one would climb up there and sleep on that

grass on Mid-summer Night, one would dream of ones future husband."

"Well! Have you ever tried it?"

"Oh, no," she said in some confusion.

"It would be worth the effort, don't you think?"

"I—I suppose so."

"Do you know of any more fairy tales?"

"There is another story which I heard years ago. I didn't understand it then, but I think I do now."

"What is it?"

"The story goes that away up on Istindet somewhere in the forest on the side hill, there is a man who has done some misdeed, and for that he was turned to either a trolld, a deer, or a tree. No one knows which. He can be released only by some other person who shall have implicit faith in him, who shall believe in him through good or ill, as firmly as the rocks in Istindet itself."

"And what do you understand by the story, Marie?" asked Atelia after a thoughtful silence.

"I think I understand, but it is hard to explain. When we love somebody, we ought to be true—never give up—our love should be as strong and as firm as the rocks in the mountain."

"And such a love will shield the one loved from any danger,—will prove a wall of protection around him—yes, that's it, Marie." And Atelia

put her arm about her cousin, and looking into the tell-tale face, saw therein a counterpart of her own secret. How alike is love in valley or in mountain, with lady or the lady's maid!

The fine weather was in danger of passing, said Uncle Lars; so the visitors would better get back to Skarpen. When winter once set in, it was difficult to travel. The evening before they were to climb down the mountain and meet the "Viking," they had an unusually bright fire in the big fireplace. The "Eagle-nest" farmer wanted to give his guests a warm send-off so that they would come again. Atelia promised that if she remained in Norway long enough she would certainly do that. As for Oletta, she didn't know; Atelia must have the credit for her coming. Uncle Lars told of hunting adventures, the girls sang some folk-songs, and then Atelia announced she would tell a story—a true story.

The company settled themselves to enjoy it. A rising wind outside rattled a loose door, which Uncle Lars got up and secured. Atelia waited until he was seated again, then she began in a clear, earnest voice:

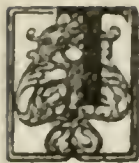
"On the 23rd day of December, 1805, a baby boy was born over in the land of America—" Atelia told the wonderful story of the boy Prophet Joseph Smith, his vision of the Father and the Son, and his receiving the plates from

which the Book of Mormon was translated. She told the story well, that evening, and it made its impression on her listeners. At its close, her aunt's clicking knitting needles ceased, and she said in a very matter-of-fact way:

“That is a very pretty story, Atelia; but you had better tell it to the priest, and find out whether it is really true or not.”

CHAPTER XX.

ATELIA SAILS ANOTHER RACE.



HE return trip to Skarpen was devoid of special incident. The fisher-folks said the two girls were wise in getting back when they did, as it seemed that fine weather was over. In fact, the very day after, the clouds from the north-west darkened the sky, and the wind freshened to quite a gale. This was not called a storm by the fishers, for most of them put out as usual for their day's work.

News came to Skarpen that day that Granfjord, about a dozen miles away, was full of herring. A whale had been seen in the offing, which explained the presence of the fish. The news was told to every fisher on his return, so that evening the whole village was astir, preparatory for a general rush to Granfjord in the morning.

The morning broke gray and cold. The wind blew steadily on the bay, so the white-caps chased each other in regular intervals landward until they broke in spray on the shore. Provisions and extra clothing were stowed away in the boats, and at daybreak, a fleet of boats pushed out on the rough water, and with sail and oar, made for the fishing grounds. Men, women,



A fleet of boats * * * * * made for the fishing grounds.

and children went, nearly depopulating the village. Those who could not fish, could sort and clean on shore.

Atelia went also. She could not resist the excitement of taking part in a big catch of fish. The sea, that morning, was also to her liking; and she sat in her uncle's boat by the tiller and steered.

Arriving at Granfjord, the women and children were set ashore, while the men hurriedly rowed into favorable positions for casting their nets. The fishing was good all morning. Boat-load after boat-load came to shore, unloaded, then they sped back, leaving the women to work over the big shining piles of fish. The wind did not lessen, and there was threatening rain, so shortly after noon, Atelia had a chance to return to Skarpen with a boat-load of women and children, and she went with them. Storm or no storm, every man there would remain as long as he could draw in such a harvest.

Oletta was busy in the house when Atelia returned. The house-keeper had made the rooms clean and cosy. The fire felt good. As Atelia was going up to her room to change her clothing, Oletta called:

"Atelia, I forgot—here's a letter for you. It must have come a day or two ago."

Atelia received the letter, then went on up stairs to her room. A letter! Was it from Sister Nordo, or perhaps from Uncle Sande about

the insurance. The light was bad, so she went to the window, pushed aside the curtain, and looked at the handwriting. It was from neither of these persons, and the post mark was Strand. Atelia's heart beat rapidly. What could it mean? What had Halvor Steen to say to her? She dallied with the letter as if afraid to break the seal and read its contents. A gust of wind, accompanied with a dash of rain on the window, caused her to look out. A storm was surely coming, a real coast storm.

At last she got the letter out, unfolded it, and read:

“Dear Atelia,

I am coming to see you. Yesterday I came back from quite an extended trip, and then first learned of the terrible misfortune to Heimstad. I went up there as fast as I could. I found the blackened ruins, but not you. Atelia, as I stood there and looked and realized that Heimstad was gone, I wondered whether or not my chance of earthly and eternal happiness had also vanished. And now I cannot rest until I find that out. I am coming to you as fast as the steamer will bring me. I shall travel part of the way in the regular coast boat, then our mutual friend, Captain Moen, will take me to Skarpen. Look out for me, and give me as kindly welcome as you can. I have a lot to tell you. I had a long, and a mighty enlightening

talk with the President in Christiania not long ago—but I'll tell you all about that when I see you.—I'll be right on the heels of this letter.

Sincerely yours as ever and as of old,

HALVOR."

Atelia pressed her face against the window-pane, but she did not see the rain, nor for a moment, hear the wind. Halvor was coming to her, the Halvor as of old, with something added—yes there must be something added, or else what was the use. Oh, what a letter! Could she not read between the lines! She held the letter up by the rain-washed window, and read it again. Then she tucked it away in her trunk and changed her clothes.

"Atelia," shouted Oletta from below. "Come down. There is a terrible storm coming."

Atelia came down smiling to the frightened cousin. They both looked out of the window seaward. "It's not so bad," said Atelia.

"Not yet," answered Oletta; "but I've seen big storms before, and this is the way they begin."

"We'll hope for the best. If it gets bad, the folks will not attempt to come home, but will spend the night at Granfjord."

How could Atelia go about so light-hearted, thought her cousin. She had perhaps never seen a real storm, which on that coast, never ceased until it had taken its toll of human life. Listen!

Every loose window or board rattles in the wind.

The storm that broke upon the coast that late afternoon was one of the worst known in the history of that storm-frequented region; not in its loss of life, which happily was not great, but in its suddenness and fierceness. To Atelia and Oletta who stood watching it from the kitchen window, it seemed that the distant sea and sky had blended into one gray mass, and was rushing in upon the coast, bent on the destruction of everything in its way. First the outer islands, then the nearer headlands were swallowed up as if they had become a part of the coming storm-cloud. A single fishing boat on the fjord hurriedly steered for shore, and barely escaped. It became dark. A wild, weird cry came from afar, and changed to a thunderous roar as the rain struck walls and windows and roofs. The rain pelted and beat upon the house as if it were a horde of human beings clammering for admittance. Water ran down the windows, down and under the door which met the brunt of the assault, until a stream ran on to the floor.

The girls lighted the lamp. They prepared some supper which they partook of without appetite. As the evening advanced, Atelia tried to read aloud, but there was no heart or interest in it. About midnight, they supposed that the storm had abated somewhat, so they lay down to try to sleep. When at last they dropped off,

it seemed but a troubled moment when it was morning,—morning by the clock only, for without it was yet dark and stormy.

In time a little gray light trickled from the south east. Skarpen lay against the cliff thoroughly washed. As daylight came, the wind was yet strong and the waves rolled in thunderous roar against the headlands. The fishing fleet could not come home yet. A few of the old men, some women and venturesome children came from the shelter of the houses, and stood looking seaward. Atelia and Oletta joined them.

“What do you think, Father Hans—are the folks all right?” asked one of an old man who looked as though the sea had done its worst for him.

“Oh yes, yes,” he mumbled. “They’ll have sense enough to stay on land.”

“I hope so,” said a woman as she scoldingly picked up a child that had run after her.

“What is that against Sten island?” asked one.

All eyes were strained in the direction indicated. A black spot could be seen against the white, foamy line at the base of the cliff.

“It looks like a ship might be on the rocks,” croaked the old man, as if this was no uncommon thing. “Here, Karen, let me take your glass.”

The old man leveled his glass at the dark object. For a long time—it seemed—he gazed. Then slowly he lowered the glass and said: “It looks like the ‘Viking.’”

“What! the ‘Viking’ on the rocks—and—Halvor—” cried Atelia, as she grasped Oletta by the arm. “O, dear God!” The wild, gray, stormy world seemed to swallow her up and blot her out completely. Oletta held her from falling. The possibility that Halvor, who was coming to her with words of reassuring love, was wrecked on the cruel rocks of Sten island came thus suddenly to her. “Oh, no; Oletta, tell me it can’t be true.”

Oletta did not understand this sudden outburst, but her cousin’s colorless face frightened her. “Come, let us go to the house,” pleaded Oletta.

Atelia stood for a moment. Then as if freed from some enemy, she straightened. She was herself again. She grasped the old fisherman by the arm.

“Are you sure it is the ‘Viking’?”

“Yes; quite sure.”

“And the steamer is in danger, is it not?”

“Well, yes; it’s a wonder if there is a soul alive on her—”

Atelia could not repress a cry.

“That depends, of course, how long the boat has been there.”

“Can’t they be rescued?”

“Oh, yes,” he replied in a matter-of-fact tone, “if there were anybody to do the rescuing.”

“You mean if we had men and boats.”

“Certainly. I can’t do anything, and I’m the

best man left here. No woman could take a boat to that wreck."

Atelia looked out upon the seething, rolling water as if she were a general looking over a field preparing for battle and outlining her plan of campaign. In a moment she had decided.

"I can take a boat to that wreck," she said simply. "Come to the house, Oletta."

Atelia ran to the house, the other followed.

"What are you going to do, Atelia?"

"I'm going to take a boat out to the wreck."

"Oh, can you?"

"Yes: I'm a sailor, Oletta—the best sailor in Norway, so I have heard said. Now, Atelia Heldman, prove your right to the title." As she talked, she hurriedly took off some clothing and put on other,—heavy and waterproof. "Is there a good boat in the place, Oletta?"

The girl thought for a moment. "Yes, there is Olof Anders' new boat. He is away and has it locked up in his boat house."

"We'll take it."

"But—"

"I'll pay for any damage. Help me to get it out. Come on. Bring an ax."

"If you go, I'm going with you."

"No; you're no sailor. Stay here."

"I'm going with you," and with that Oletta also hurriedly put on seagoing attire.

The old man and the augmented flock of women followed the two girls down to the water

and to Olof Ander's boat house. Oletta tried the lock, but it was secure. Then with one sure blow of the ax, she broke the fastening, and the door opened.

"Here, all of you," she called to the women, "help me with the boat. Hurry, dear folks, time is precious," as the women hesitated in taking part in this piratical proceeding. However, the boat was easily launched, and the two girls had it outside before either help or hindrance came. Atelia threw in bales of rope, the ax from the house, and a bailing pail. She saw that the mast was ready to place in the socket, and that the sail was in order. "Now, Oletta, if you must come, step in. I will need help, but—"

"I'm going with you," replied the girl as she took her place in the pitching boat.

Atelia shoved away, leaped in, seized the oars, and was soon away from the shore. Then she put the mast in place, and carefully lifted the sail. The wind was dead ahead, so great care must be taken to get out into the open for tacking, which was a difficult thing with such a sail and such a boat. As the crowd on shore stood in breathless wonder and watched the girl maneuver her boat safely out, they shouted their hurrah, and the old man said:

"She'll make it if anybody can. She's a sailor."

Atelia Heldman was sailing another race, a race, not for prize or honor, but a race for life—a race backed by love against heavy odds.

Carefully, she tested her strange boat, which proved to be a good, steady sailor. She instructed Oletta how to hold the rope which regulated the sail, then with her hand on the tiller, she brought the boat on its right tack. With all her skill and care, she could not keep some of the highest wave-crests from dashing over into the boat. The wind was bitterly cold. Upon a ragged wave the boat balanced, then down it slid to a deep trough of the green sea; but they made headway.

For half an hour they kept on their course. Then Atelia brought the boat to a standstill square against the wind, telling Oletta to lower the sail gradually. Then when the boat had turned to the left tack, the "skipper" instructed her "mate" to carefully lift the sail, and adjust her position to the new tilt of the boat. The wind caught the full sail once more, and again they made progress.

As they neared Sten island, they got a better view of the wrecked steamer, which was wedged in between the rocks. The full force of the big Atlantic waves dashed against these rocks, and at times seemed to sweep the deck of the unfortunate vessel. The rescuers were not near enough to count the number of men clinging to the rigging, but they could see them there out of reach of the bulk of water which broke across the deck. How long these men could hold out depended perhaps on how long they had been in their perilous position. Then again when the

ship would be dashed to pieces was also a matter of conjecture.

With a prayer in her heart and every nerve and muscle keyed to do the exact right thing, Atelia raced her boat across the waves. In an hour, they were half way and all well. True, the two girls were cold, and their feet were wet; but these were trifles in the big thing they were doing. Oletta baled out the boat, carefully following Atelia's instructions in every move.

"How many men are there, Oletta? Can you tell?"

"One, two, three, four, five—no, six," counted the girl.

"They might all be there.—If only we can help them.—Oletta, how can we help them?"

It was difficult to talk in the roar of wind and wave. It occurred now to the girls that perhaps they could do nothing. They would not dare approach the stranded steamer, for they themselves would be dashed on the rocks and their boat crushed like a shell. The men could not possibly reach their boat. Now, what could be done?

"The men see us," said Oletta. "They are waving to us."

"What can we do?" shouted Atelia against the wind.

They were now much nearer their destination. Yes, there were six men clinging to the mast. It was a good thing that the "Viking" had a

big, strong mast. Atelia now remembered, with gratitude, that feature of the little steamer. Atelia motioned to her companion to leave the sail and come nearer.

"Do you know, Oletta, if there is a good landing on the lee side of Sten island?"

"A fisherman once lived there, but it is deserted now."

"And can we climb to the top of the island?"

"Oh yes; there is a good path."

"Listen! we can't get near the 'Viking' by water; we'll climb the island, and see what we can do with ropes. See, the steamer is so close to the cliff that we can throw the men a rope."

"It might be farther than it looks, Atelia."

"True, but I see no other way. Get back and manage the sail. We are to change our course."

As their boat veered about, there was danger of the big waves capsizing them, and it required all their skill to keep afloat. Soon the island would hide them from the wreck.

"Are the men all there yet, Oletta?" Oletta proved to have better eyes.

"One, two, three, four five.—One is gone—no, there he is—they're all there."

"Thank God!"

"The men are waving to us again. They think we are leaving."

"Wave back to them. I can't let go the tiller for a moment. Stand up and wave your cap."

Oletta did so, and it seemed to the girls that

a faint cheer came to them from the men, as they disappeared behind the headland.

The island gave them shelter from the direct force of the storm, and it was not so difficult to sail up to the deserted landing. They managed to fasten their boat, and climb safely out. What a relief it was to again be able to move and keep from freezing! Hurriedly they got the coils of rope and the ax out of the boat, and began the wet climb up the steep sides of Sten island.

CHAPTER XXI.

"ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX—ALL HERE."



TEN ISLAND is just a big rock standing alone out in the wild Atlantic. Its top area of two or three acres is somewhat level; but the storms of ages have washed every vestage of soil from its hard surface, and what little vegetation it possesses is hidden in protected crevices and ledges.

Atelia and Oletta climbed on up the steep path to the top. There they had to brace themselves against the wind which seemingly, desired to lift them bodily from the rock and cast them into the sea. They made their way with what haste they could to the outer sea-ward edge where the top surface was broken and cracked. Slowly moving to the edge, they looked below. The stranded steamer was directly below them. With thunderous roar, the waves dashed against the rocks and swept over the doomed vessel, long arms of heavy spray reaching upward as if trying to drag the men in the rigging down; but they were all there yet, six of them, clinging tenaciously for life, hatless all, coatless some, drenching wet all of them.

The girls shouted, but for some time, they could not attract the men's attention; but when they looked up and saw hope for rescue, they

could be seen to straighten into new life. Atelia unwound some of the smaller rope, tied a stone on the end, then with all her strength, threw it out toward the men; but the rope fell short, and they had to draw it up again. Once more she tried. This time her aim was not good, and the stone fell on the deck. The men cheered.

“Here, let me try,” said Oletta. “I can throw better than you.”

Once, twice, Oletta tried, Atelia crying out in her anxiety. Then the third time the rope fell within reach, and one of the men seized it. The girls now fastened a heavier rope to the light one, then motioned for the men to draw it down, which they did. They fastened their end securely to the mast while the girls wound their end about the boulders on top.

But when it was all done, it was useless. No one could climb up that steep rope, especially half-frozen men. The men waved and made unrecognizable suggestions; but the two girls stood as if at the end of their resources. In the half-drowned forms below, Atelia was sure she recognized Halvor and Captain Moen. Gracious! that was a big wave. If the mast should break, or the boat itself be dashed to pieces! Oh, what more could be done!

Was not that Halvor who pointed up, then further down the cliff? Again he made the movement. Was he telling them something to do? Atelia leaned far over. The wind, it seemed,

would not let her fall over, for she felt as if she were leaning against a solid wall.

“Oletta, what are they pointing at—the men—see?”

“The rope is too steep.”

“Is there a place to fasten it farther down?—Yes, that’s what they mean. I see a place, if we can only get to it. Here, Oletta, unfasten the rope again, but be careful you do not lose it.”

Atelia made a loose loop in the larger rope, which she slipped about her waist. Then she tied securely the end of another rope about her under her arms.

“Now,” she said, “I see a place where I think I can climb down. You get well back and let this other rope out slowly as I need it. Play it out across this smooth rock, so that if I should slip and fall, you can hold me until I can get my position again.”

“Let me go, Atelia.”

“No; I am lighter than you. I could not hold you. All right, now.”

Slowly and carefully Atelia climbed down the rocks. They were slippery and oftentimes sharp. She bruised her knees and cut her hands, but she did not heed, nor even know it. As she let herself down from shelf to shelf, the rope under her arms became so tight that it hurt; but that was assurance that Oletta had a firm hold above. As she got nearer to the waves, their roar deafened her, and their spray some-

times shut out her vision of the ship and men below. Would she be in time? What a thunderous shock that was! Had the ship gone to pieces? No; there it was yet. The big rope was dangling from her waist out to the mast. Sometimes it pulled hard. She had provided plenty of slack rope, she thought; but if the mast went, or the boat itself went now, she would go to destruction with the rest. The rocks were so slippery, for the rain came in squalls. Neither of the girls had provided themselves with heavy sea boots; so now, Atelia's shoes were wet and torn, and the sharper rocks on which she trod hurt her feet.

There, at last, was the place in the face of the cliff to which Halvor had pointed. It was a wide shelf, just out of reach of the waves. Could she reach it? She could see no place on which she could let herself down to it. She stood for an instant pressing against the wall of rock, then she felt herself slipping, slipping. Her head swam. The waves seemed to be reaching out for her, and their voice to be calling. It grew dark—but just for an instant—then she was herself again, standing safely on the wider shelf of rock.

She looked hurriedly about her, nor did she heed the cheering men. Well back from the edge were a number of boulders. Unloosening the larger rope from her waist, she wound it around and around one of them, testing it to see

if it would hold. Then she hailed the men. The rope was nearly on a level now, and it was not far to the mast, which, luckily, was steady.

See! Captain Moen tries it. Hand over hand he comes along, and in a very few moments he drops safely on the shelf. Then another, and another, until the six had crossed from danger to safety. When the last had landed he exclaimed, "Thank God, thank God."

And the others said, "Amen, in the name of Jesus, Amen."

But where was the rescuer? Ah, there she lay, back of the big boulder, as if dead, but clinging with bleeding hands to the heavy rope which reached from those hands around the rocks then across the wild sea to the mast. Halvor reached her first. In a dazed way he looked at her lying there drenched and broken. He dropped down by her.

"Atelia, Atelia," he cried. He pushed back the big coils of hair from the pale face. He lifted her head into his arms. Captain Moen and others came.

"Here," said the captain, "there is just a drop left." He pulled a flask from his pocket, and Halvor put it to her lips. She moved as he was doing it, then opened her eyes and looked at the men about her.

"Halvor," she smiled. "And Captain Moen—and all the men—one, two—six."

“Yes, Atelia, you great, brave girl, we’re all here—and because of you.”

Atelia struggled to her feet, looked at the smaller rope still about her waist. “Oletta is up there,” she said, “holding to her post of duty. Go to her—somebody.”

Three of the men slowly scaled the difficult path. They were weak, and stiff and sore, but they made their way upward, and there found the other heroine bravely holding the rope; but she was nearly dead with cold. The men took the rope from her, then walked her back and forth until warmth came back to her chilled body. That is all they could do for the time being.

Captain Moen found a less difficult way to get up, and with his and Halvor’s assistance Atelia also reached the top again. The wind had lessened a little, and the party of rescued and rescuers made their way across Sten island, down its landward side to the deserted fisherman’s cabin. There they found dry wood and matches, and soon a fire was blazing in the old stove.

The rescued men lay on the floor by the comforting warmth, and some of them soon went to sleep. All were so completely tired out that they got into as easy positions as they could to remain still and rest. Captain Moen looked at Halvor and Atelia drying themselves by the fire. He himself tried to keep awake, but the

long watch and strain had so worn him out that he at last lay down on the floor with his men. Oletta was the best preserved of the party, and she replenished the fire as it was needed. Atelia had never breathed a word about any lover, and so one coming so suddenly to her from the wreck was a great wonder to her cousin. She supposed it was all right, for the man was a fine-looking one, and Atelia appeared happy.

"Halvor," Atelia said, "you also lie down to rest. You are nearly dead for want of sleep."

"Yes, I am—but—"

"I am all right now. A little stiff and sore, and tired—but you—how long were you up in the rigging?"

"Nearly all night—and you, dear, came, risked your life—"

"There now—we'll talk about it some other time. Lie right here."

"I—I believe I will."

All the men were asleep. Atelia got stiffly up, tidied her torn and bedragged apparel as best she could. "How is the storm?" she asked her cousin, who was looking out of the open window.

"The worst is over, I think. Some of the boats are coming home from Granfjord."

"Do they see the wreck?"

"It appears not; they are making straight for home."

“Is that possible?” Atelia came to the window and looked out. The sea was quieter. “I believe one boat is coming this way.”

As they gazed, they saw a number of the returning boats change their course so as to sail by Sten island. They soon disappeared behind the headland, but in time one of them came into sight again.

“They have seen our smoke,” said Atelia.

The boat sailed up to the shore. The girls met the surprised men on the landing. How came these girls here, looking as they did?

“What—what are you doing here?” they asked.

“Is the ‘Viking’ still on the rocks?”

“What’s left of her. She’s being fast pounded to pieces.”

“Can nothing be saved?”

“Let us thank God, my dear lady, if perchance some of the crew and passengers are saved.—Do you know anything about them?”

“Come up to the cabin and see.”

The three fishers followed the girls, wondering what they would find.

“Sh—don’t make a noise,” admonished Atelia. They opened the door and saw the six men lying asleep. “For the love of heaven—”

“Sh— — They are all here—one, two, three, four, five, six.” She pointed to each of them as she counted. “Let them sleep.”

As they stepped out, they saw other boats coming and tie up by the two already there. Oletta's father was among the men. He had been to Skarpen, and hearing of the two girls' doings, had hastily placed clothing and provisions in his boat and sailed to Sten island as fast as he could. He was overjoyed when he learned what had been done. Atelia and Oletta wrapped themselves in the warm shawls which he had brought and went down to the boats where quite a number of men had gathered. To these the girls had to tell how the men had been rescued.

"The Lord's hand was in it," said one.

"It was," answered Atelia reverently.

Toward the middle of the afternoon those of the men who were not awake were awakened, and the whole party set sail for Skarpen. Atelia sat in the stern of her uncle's boat, and with her was Halvor. This time neither of them had anything to do with helm or oar or rope. They were satisfied to let others do the sailing. They were content to sit quietly, close together, Atelia's bruised hands in his. She was no longer fearful, for she felt that every barrier between them had been removed. Had her love preserved him, saved him—her love, with the love of God, his Father? She believed it had. A prayer of thankfulness was in her heart. And he also was satisfied. Touched by the illuminating light of the gospel which had come to him, he could see

this girl's radiant beauty of soul—and to think that he was alive, and that he had not lost her, but might have her for time and eternity—!

“See, the ‘Viking’ is about gone.”

The steamer lay on its side now, broken and in ruins. Each wave washed over the battered hull, hiding it for a moment under the green water. Atelia turned away from the sight and hid her face in Halvor's big coat.

CHAPTER XXII.

ELDER LARSEN GETS EVEN WITH UNCLE SANDE.



HE storm which swept the west coast brought sleet and snow to the uplands of Telemarken; and Elder Waldemar Larsen was out in the worst of it. He was making his farewell visit to the friends and Saints whom he had made acquaintance with in his missionary labors. Brother and Sister Bonden had been so enthusiastically active that he had to remain in their neighborhood for nearly a week filling appointments to speak, which they had made for him. He had enjoyed every minute of that time, but the delay had caused him to miss the last boat on the lakes. The ice had stopped inland water traffic for the winter. The Elder would have to walk most of the way back to Skein.

This did not worry the missionary. There were many stopping places on the way, with good people that would never forgive him if he passed them by. Brother Bonden lived nearly at the end of his Telemarken route, and when Elder Larsen had left him for his homeward journey the weather had been quite pleasant for that season of the year. However, on the second day out, the storm had come, and had

caught the missionary as he was trudging along the high-road leading down to Thorvand.

The air was full of falling flakes. From the top of a hill, the lone traveler saw the frozen lake, now being coated with snow. He knew the country well, so he was in no danger of getting lost, even in a snow-storm. It was the middle of the afternoon when he paused to rest on this hill, and as he seated himself on the low stone wall which bounded the road, he looked over the dreary, white prospect.

This was perhaps his last visit to these parts. Would he ever come back to this Norway which he had learned to love? He was going home soon, home to America and to the Valleys of the Mountains; and his heart became soft with thoughts of loved ones waiting for him there. Many a snow storm had he been out in up in his native mountains, and there was always something grand in watching the snow either fall softly or drive fiercely from heaven and deck the earth with its cold, white mantle.

But he must be getting on. It was yet a few hours walk to Sister Nordo's, where he would have to stop for the night. Whew, that was a stiff breeze! The snow pelted him in the face, and as he looked up to make sure that he was on the road, he suddenly saw before him Uncle Sande's house stand out against the gray sky. He remembered distinctly his last and only visit to that house, and how that when he

had left, the owner had said, "Come again."

Waldemar Larsen stopped and thought a moment. Yes, he would accept, even at this late day, Uncle Sande's invitation.

But what kind of reception would he receive? Well, he would trust the Lord for that. There could be no harm in calling and bidding the old man goodby. He remembered Atelia had said that her uncle was a lonely old man, now since his old housekeeper had died and left him to take care of himself. He remembered also that Atelia had told of a certain sad phase of Uncle Sande's life. All thoughts of "getting even" for the argumentative drubbing the man had given him on his former visit was far from the young man's mind as he went up to the door and knocked.

In a few moments Uncle Sande himself opened the door. He stared at the snow-covered visitor. Waldemar looked into the old man's face to discover, if he could, the nature of the reception which awaited him.

"I am Elder Larsen," began the young man in explanation.

"Yes; I know you; come in—come in out of the storm."

"Thank you." Waldemar shook off the snow and stepped into the hall, where he was told to hang up his hat and coat.

"Come in to the fire," said Uncle Sande—"This

storm has come on suddenly—has taken us all by surprise, it seems.”

Waldemar explained that he was making his farewell visit to Telemarken, and thought he would just step in say goodbye.”

“That’s right; I’m glad you did. I’m glad you did not leave the country without letting me get another chance at you.”

The visitor looked at the old man who did not appear to be in a combative mood. In fact, Uncle Sande seemed changed. He was older; his face had changed; his manner was gentler; his voice softer; he even smiled a little at Elder Larsen, as he placed a few more sticks on his fire.

“In the first place,” said Uncle Sande, “I have to ask your forgiveness for my ill treatment of you at times—yes, I know just what I have done and said. Without going into details, say that I am forgiven.”

“You are, and in fact have been for a long time. I try never to have ill feelings against anybody.”

“Thank you. Now let’s say no more about that. The storm is bad outside, and it is getting dark. You can stay with me tonight.”

“Oh, I hadn’t thought of that.”

“No; but there’s no reason why you shouldn’t, and I would very much like you to.”

Strange as it seemed to Waldemar, he could not doubt the old man’s sincerity. Yes, he would

be pleased to stay with him, if he desired.

“Now, I had better explain to you why my room has a festal appearance. I was to have had a little celebration and a little company; but an hour ago I received a message that my company could not come, so I shall have to be content with what we two can do. It is dark. I will light the lamp.”

Elder Larsen looked about him. Now his attention was called to it, the room was adorned somewhat out of the ordinary with evergreens and autumn leaves. On the wall, as if occupying the place of honor amid bunting and green hung the portrait of a young woman.

“Yes,” explained the old man, as he noticed the direction of Waldemar’s gaze, “that is Petrine, in whose loving memory I hold sacred this day. Forty-nine years ago she came into the world, twenty-seven years ago she left it.”

Waldemar now remembered the story as Atelia had related it to him, and he looked again at the portrait on the wall. So this was the girl whom Uncle Sande had won and then lost, and the cause of his never being married. He looked from the picture to his host.

“I’ll tell you the story after a while,” said Atelia’s uncle. “Just now we shall have something to eat. My company, let me explain, was to have been two of my neighbors, that is all. I never have many people, for Petrine never cared for a crowd. She—but later for that.”

He cleared the table of books, and then spread a cloth. From an adjoining room, he brought dishes of cake, fruit, sweets, and sandwiches. In short order, he made and brought hot chocolate. He drew up the chairs, and turned up the wick of the lamp. "Now, then," said he, "sit up; you are, no doubt hungry. The storm is still raging; pity any who must be out in it tonight."

The Mormon Elder was asked to say the blessing, which he gladly did, not forgetting to thank the Lord for all His kindness, and asking divine favor for him who had provided the food and entertainment. Then as they ate they talked of Atelia, of the loss of Heimstad, and they told each other what news they had of common interest. Then when Waldemar vowed he could eat no more, Uncle Sande drew a white cloth over the table, saying they would need some more after a while. They moved their chairs from the table.

"Now," said Uncle Sande, "I must burn a little of the King's incense. You don't object?"

"Oh, I like it," answered Waldemar.

The other went to a drawer in an old-fashioned bureau, and took out a tiny bag of the sweet-smelling herbs. A small pinch was placed on the warm stove, and soon a pleasant fragrance filled the room.

"Petrine gave me this nearly thirty years ago. Each year at this anniversary, I have burned

a little of it, until, as you see, it is nearly gone. I have enough to last a few years longer—about as long as I shall last, before I go to her. Have you ever heard of Petrine, Elder Larsen?"

"Atelia has told me a little, a very little."

"It is not very often I talk about her to anybody; but this day, as I have said, is sacred to her, and on this day I talk about her if I can get an attentive and sympathetic listener."

"I shall be very glad to hear you."

"Petrine—" the old man leaned back in his easy chair and with closed eyes seemed to dwell lovingly on the name, "Petrine was born in a small village across Thorvand. As a young fellow, I used to sail across frequently, and one day I rescued a little girl from the water. I never was much of a ladies' man; for many years I had no love affairs, and I was called a confirmed old batchelor before I met her—again over in the village—Petrine, the little girl whom I had rescued from the lake, now grown to beautiful womanhood. That is the picture of her on the wall."

Waldemar could easily have imagined that the sweet-faced girl was smiling down at them as the old man lived again the romance of his youth. To anyone else, she and all that pertained to her was no doubt commonplace enough, but to him who had been touched with the magic power of love, the world had been transformed

and through all these long years she had reigned in his heart in undimmed glory.

“Yes; she was all that is good, and true, and beautiful. We pledged our troth, and the wedding day was set. . . . Then she died.” . . .

The old man ceased and there was silence for a time. Then he went on again with his story, mainly about the virtues of Petrine, of her beauty of soul and goodness of heart. “And so,” he concluded, “I have been alone for these many years. I have had no eyes nor heart for any one else—perhaps I have been selfish in this—I don’t know. Once a year, on the day of her birth, I invite two or three of my friends to take part with me in this simple demonstration for her sake. . . . Now I am about through with this life. I am waiting to go where she has gone. . . . Is she waiting for me? Has she gone on to other spheres of existence? Will I meet her as she was here? Has her love persisted as mine has? . . . Yes; Petrine is still Petrine and I shall meet her once more,—don’t you think so, Elder Larsen?”

“Yes; Uncle Sande; she is still the woman you knew here; and without doubt, she still loves you—that is, if you have done nothing to forfeit that love.”

The old man looked at Waldemar strangely. “I have done nothing. No; I have been true to her.”

“And you have always been true to the truth

of God as His Spirit has given you to see it. If so, then you have also been true to that sweet spirit angel who was to have been your wife."

Uncle Sande leaned back in his chair again and closed his eyes. His mouth twitched, and he pressed his hands together. Elder Larsen went on:

"You must pardon a young man talking to you like this; but I must deliver my message of truth to young and old alike. We two have been enough together to understand each other. You have read the literature of the Latter-day Saints. You know what they teach, so you will understand me when I ask, why do you not put yourself in the way that leads to Petrine as a wife? To make her your wife was the one supreme goal of your young life. Failure to do that has been your life's tragedy. But I tell you in all truth and soberness that even yet that need not fail. You may yet have Petrine as a wife, not for time, but for eternity, and with her by your side go on to the exaltation and glory which God has ordained for those who will."

The young missionary had perfect freedom of thought and speech now, and without fear, he went on: "I think I realize your condition of mind, my friend. All your days you have been taught that in the other world to which we are all going, there is no such thing as family relationship of husband and wife. You have been taught that the union which meant everything

to you, has been made forever impossible. You in your effort to be orthodox have stoically put down the demands of your heart. All your life," said the elder as if he could see into this man's innermost being, "your soul's longing has had to contend with what you were taught to look upon as one of God's incomprehensible laws. Now, I tell you that God's laws are natural, and just, and good. I tell you further that no good thing shall be withheld from good men and women, if they will place themselves in a position to receive it. . . . What you need to do is to have faith in God, in the living God who has revealed himself to man in our day, to repent of your sins, and be baptized, by one having authority, for the remission of those sins, and then be confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Then the way is opened before you, and through your continued faithfulness, you may lay claim on the blessings of the everlasting gospel. And these blessings include all that your heart has longed for these many years."

For quite a long time the two men sat in the silence of the night without speaking. Uncle Sande's head was bowed, and when Waldemar arose, and went to the window to look into the stormy night, the old man aroused as if from a dream. "You're not going?" he asked.

"Oh, no; fear not; the storm is fierce without,

and I am thankful to have the shelter of your home.”

“Then come and sit down again. I feared you were going to leave me, just now when I needed you most. I am in turmoil of heart and mind, and I appreciate your presence. For many days I have been fighting—yes, just as you said; and Oh, the darkness that has been about me. It’s hard to fight in the dark. If one has a glimmer of light, no matter how little or how far away, it is something.”

“Yes, dear friend; and I bring to you a blaze of light, not a glimmer only.”

“What profiteth it if one is immersed in light if the windows of the soul are closed to it? I realize to a degree that I have been incased in dogma which has shut out largely the revelations of heaven—not altogether, my friend, or I should not have responded to the light you have brought, even in the feeble manner which I have. I am grateful for the glimpse of a seeming dawn—pray God for me that I may see the full day.”

Waldemar’s heart went out to the old man, sitting in his chair as if weak from some strenuous physical exertion; and he talked from the fulness of his soul to the man groping towards the light. The man listened, without comment, and when the Elder’s words seemed to lag, he would say, “Go on.” The fire burned low in the stove, the clock ticked steadily on the shelf, the wind without had ceased to make

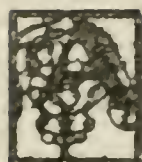
itself heard. It was late when Waldemar had no more to say, and then the old man shook himself and became active. The table was again uncovered, and again they ate.

“Now you must go to bed,” said Uncle Sande. “You are tired from tramping in the snow. It will be some time tomorrow before the roads will be passible, so I shall have your company in the morning.” He lighted a lamp, and led the way up to the guest chamber under the roof. “Good-night, sleep well; I will call you in the morning when breakfast is ready.”

In his prayers that night, Waldemar Larsen thanked the Lord for the glorious way in which he had been able to “get even” with Uncle Sande.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT STRAND.



AFTER the storm, the sky of the west coast became sunny blue and the sea was quiet as a land-locked fjord. All who had taken part in the recent fight for life, rested for a few days with friends at Skarpen. Meanwhile the enterprising correspondent for the "Christiania Posten" sent an account of the wreck and the rescue to his paper, not sparing telegraphic toll or words of praise. "Posten" came to the town of Strand by early morning train, and Frue Steen read the account over the cooling contents of her coffee cup.

Atelia and Halvor read it two days later by the light which streamed through the geranium-filled window of Aunt Maren's best room, in which these two had been left largely to themselves. Atelia, sore and tired, had not cared to move about much, so Halvor, and occasionally Captain Moen, spent some of their time visiting with her. Halvor and she were alone that morning as Aunt Maren handed the paper in to Atelia, announcing the article in it about the wreck and rescue.

"Halvor, read it," said Atelia, as she gave the paper to him.

He came close to her and read the account. When he had finished she said:

"The facts are stated fairly enough, but the praise is overdone."

"Here is another item," said Halvor. "'Posten' says editorially that the King will surely send you and Oletta gold medals."

"The King doesn't know that I am a Mormon."

"And what difference does that make?"

"It shouldn't perhaps, but it usually does nevertheless."

There was a noise without as if some one had unexpectedly arrived. Halvor went to the window, but saw no one. "It's a beautiful day outside," he remarked, "don't you think that if you wrapped up well you would enjoy a walk?"

She came to the window where he was standing. "Yes, it's fine, isn't it? After storm, comes sunshine."

He linked his arm in hers, and drew her close. "And that's true in more ways than one," he said. "We have entered the harbor of peace and rest, I am sure, Atelia."

She looked up into his face. Her cheeks glowed with the old-time color, and a smile played about her lips. "Do you think so? Don't be so sure, Halvor. Why, we have hardly started on the voyage of life. We are not two old, gray headed people whose life's race is run." Her smile broke into a merry laugh.

"I spoke as I felt, Atelia. I—let us sit down here on the couch and talk it over."

But hardly were they seated when a knock

came on the door, and at Atelia's, "Come in," Aunt Maren announced that her cousin Marie had arrived.

"Marie! What's she—but tell her to come in."

In a moment Marie entered. She was a picture of health and a certain type of Norwegian country beauty. Atelia saw at a glance that her cousin from the Eagle-nest Farm had changed her apparel to the more modern city style, and she had done it nicely. The two girls greeted each other warmly. Then Atelia introduced Halvor.

"We were fearful that my brother Hans was on the Viking—and I wanted to see you—and I had to come!" Marie hastened to explain as if her sudden appearance needed some justification.

"But he wasn't, was he?"

"No; Aunt Maren has just told me that—but I'm so glad you're safe."

"Yes, we're all safe, Marie, thank the Lord; and how are all the folks?"

Before Marie could answer, another knock came on the door, and after a proper pause, Captain Moen stepped in.

"Good morning, everybody," he said cheerfully. "What are you doing indoors on such a day—but halloo, who's this? Marie, of all unexpected persons. How are you?" He came up to her and shook her hand, looking at her closely as he did so. The red burned in her cheeks for a moment, then in evident embarrassment she hung her head. Atelia came to her rescue.

“Her folks were fearful that Hans might have been with you on the Viking; Marie came to see.”

“Oh, no; Hans hasn’t been with me for some time.”

“Aunt Maren has already assured her of that; and now she come to visit me. Now sit down, all of you, and don’t stand around as if you were strangers and didn’t know what to do.”

Then the talk became general. After a time Captain Moen again proposed that they all take a walk in the beautiful sunshine without. The air was cold, he said, so the ladies would have to put on warm clothing.

“Halvor and I were just planning to go out,” said Atelia. “Two more will make a jolly party.”

In a few minutes the four were walking along the mountain wall which overhung Skarpen. Atelia and Halvor lingered behind. Captain Moen and Marie strolled out on hard sands where the waves gently lapped the shore. Halvor and Atelia looked at them.

“Your cousin seems to be a fine girl,” said Halvor.

“And Captain Moen seems to be a fine man,” remarked Atelia; and as they looked at each other and smiled, Atelia was reminded of the story Marie had told her up on the mountain, of the love that was to be a wall of protection—a love that must be as firm and everlasting as the very rocks in Istindet—and as she remembered this story and looked at Marie’s face

turned toward that of Captain Moen's, she wondered with a strange, sweet wonder of the power of love.

The next day as Atelia and Halvor were planning their departure from Skarpen, the mail steamer arrived, and on it was a package of letters for them. In the ever-welcome Aunt Maren's best room, they opened and read their letters. Here are some extracts from Atelia's:

From Helga Nordo: "Our home, humble and poor as it is, is your home as long as you need it. We shall be very glad to see you again."

From Uncle Sande: "You have proved yourself a true Daughter of the North. May the Lord bless and preserve you."

From the President at Christiania: "I am very thankful to hear of your brave deeds and that you are all safe. Your country is today ringing with praise of your good work. Your brothers and sisters rejoice with you."

From Froken Berg: "I congratulate you. It was grand."

From Frue Steen: "My heart is so full I can not write what I feel. My dear Atelia, try to forgive and forget the past, and how I have treated you. I hope you will grant this request of mine, that you will come to our home and let me try to make amends. Make our home your home—"

Atelia could read no further because of the tears in her eyes. She lowered the letter and

looked out of the window to hide her face from Halvor, who was not so intent on his own letter but that he saw what was going on with Atelia; and he was content to know that it was his mother's letter she was reading, and that the tears in the girl's eyes were tears of joy. After a moment when her vision became clear enough so that she could see Captain Moen and Marie out on the rocks together, she turned again to her letter. When she had finished it, she handed it to Halvor to read.

"And you will accept mother's invitation?" he asked.

"Yes, gladly, after such a letter."

"I am so glad, Atelia."

"So am I, Halvor."

The next morning as Halvor and Atelia waved their farewells from the deck of the departing steamer, Atelia suddenly bethought herself of something she had forgotten. She leaned over the railing and motioned to her uncle.

"Oh, Uncle," she shouted, "get a new lock for the one I broke on Anders' boat house, will you. I'll send you the price of a good one."

The small crowd which had gathered to see them off cheered lustily at this, and kerchiefs and hats were waved until the steamer rounded the distant point of rocks.

It was Christmas Eve at Strand. The harbor was frozen hard, and lay as still as the town

and the hills under the snow. There was work for snow-shovelers in the streets even until afternoon, when Halvor Steen went to his office. All the morning he had been busy helping his mother and Atelia preparing for the company they were expecting that evening, and everything was in readiness, even to the bundle of oats tied to a stake in the yard for the birds' Christmas dinner.

Invitations had been sent to a few friends for the Christmas gathering—Uncle Sande, Elder Larsen, Sister Nordo and Helga, Froken Berg, and the President at Christiania. With the exception of Uncle Sande and Froken Berg, these had accepted the invitation. Halvor had asked the President to come early and directly to his office in town, for he wished to have a talk with him. When Halvor arrived at the office in the middle of the afternoon, the President was already there. The young man greeted his visitor warmly, took his top-coat and hat, and found a comfortable seat for him, then drew up his own chair.

"I'm glad you came early," said Halvor. "Elder Larsen will be along later?"

"Yes; he's busy with his leavetaking, but he'll not miss you."

"As we haven't any too much time before we are expected at the house, I might as well come direct to the point."

"Yes; certainly."

"I'm a little bothered to know exactly what to do regarding joining the Church."

"Do you mean the mode of procedure? Hasn't Elder Larsen—?"

"I don't mean that. I mean—Well, what will Atelia think if I am baptized now?"

"She will rejoice and be exceeding glad, I imagine."

"I don't know about that. Will she not think that I am doing it just for the sake of getting her?"

The President looked keenly at the serious young man before him, then in slow, earnest words he asked:

"And isn't it for her sake you will join the Church?"

"No; it will be for my soul's salvation—I want you to believe me, dear President—believe that I am absolutely honest in this," he went on earnestly. "I have studied the gospel; I have humbled myself and prayed for light and for strength to live up to the light which the Lord might send me. I have received a testimony, and I intend to do my part; but I have been fearful of what Atelia will think. I have been very careful, I might as well tell you, and have not pressed my wooing on her lately. There seems to have been a tacit understanding between us, but I have said nothing to her about marriage. I believe now that I can appreciate what she has been trying to do—what she has

done. I have obtained a glimpse of the nobility of her soul,—and—”

“And you love her more than ever?”

“Yes, if that is possible.”

“My young brother, you misunderstood my question. I believe in you—have always believed in you, and I appreciate your confidence. If more young people would counsel with those who could advise them, they would be wise. But you said you will join the Church for your soul’s salvation and not for Atelia.”

“Yes; I said that, and—”

“Wait. Would your soul’s salvation be complete without Atelia?”

The young man paused before replying. A peculiar expression of face told the President of the thought within.

“No,” said Halvor; “but if it comes to a choice between two good things, I must choose that which comes first in the line of duty, and trust to the Lord to make up the rest.”

“Well spoken, Halvor Steen; and if I mistake not that is just what Atelia Heldman thinks. Her salvation will not be perfected without you, but she also has chosen the duty which lay clear before her and trusted to the Lord for the rest; but I want to tell you further, get rid of the thought that there is any wrong in including Atelia Heldman in the blessings which will come from obeying the gospel and becoming a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints. If your motives were other than the pure ones you have expressed, there might be a question; but as I have said, I trust you, I believe in you—Now, is it not time to go? I want to see Atelia and have a talk with her myself—before you, young man, get a chance.”

“Just a moment more—just another question. Atelia is planning to go to Utah. She claims that she has nothing to hold her longer from Zion, although the last time she said that, she looked away from me. She has the insurance money from Heimstad and she has recently sold the ‘Blue Bird’ for a nice sum. Her plan is to take Sister Nordo and Helge, pay their passage, and these three make the journey together. So far, I have not objected. She seems to have the spirit of gathering strongly upon her.”

“So will you, after your baptism. I’ll talk to you further then.”

“After my baptism! yes, I wish I were baptized—Could it possibly be done before our little party this evening?”

“We do not, as a rule, advise such haste.”

“It is not haste in my case.”

“No; I suppose not. Let me see. Is there a public bath open that we could use?”

“Yes.”

“Then telephone to the house for Elder Larsen. He ought to be there by this time.”

Elder Larsen was found and told to come immediately to the office, where he arrived in

a few moments. The President explained, and soon, with a bundle under his arm, Halvor led the two others to the Baths, where a large enough private room was obtained. There Halvor was baptized by Elder Larsen, and at the water's edge he was confirmed a member of the Church. Then they went back to the office. The building was empty and still. It was Christmas Eve.

Halvor dried and combed his hair. Within that small room where business was wont to be the only concern, there brooded that evening a sweet peace of heart. "I feel so happy," said Halvor. "Thank you, my dear friends."

"And the Lord," added the President.

"Yes; let us thank the Lord, too."

They made an altar of the office desk, around which they kneeled in prayer, and the President carried their message of gratitude to the throne of grace in deeply impressive words.

The short day had closed when they arrived at the Steen residence, so now the house was a blaze of light. In its day, before the father had died, this house had been one of the finest in the town; and it was yet roomy and comfortable, well fitted for entertaining company. Sister Nordo and Helga had arrived, and even Uncle Sande, reconsidering his refusal, was there.

Frue Steen looked enquiringly at Halvor when they entered, but he answered her cheerily, "Yes, mother, it's my fault that we are a little

late. Then turning to the company, "but here we all are, even to Uncle Sande. Mother has no doubt welcomed you, but let me add mine also. I hope you all are as happy as I am."

In his handshaking, Halvor did not forget Atelia. He purposely left her to the last, and then as he held her hand a little longer than usual, his beaming face told her that something had happened. "The President wishes to see you alone for a few moments," he said. "Take him into the library sometime before dinner."

A little later Atelia managed to do this, wondering what it meant. "Halvor said you wanted to speak to me," she explained to the President.

"Did he? Well, yes; but I thought I would have to race with him for the opportunity. I have good news to tell you."

"Yes!"

"Halvor has just been baptized."

"Baptized!"

"Less than two hours ago. He did it on my advice. That's why I sent for Elder Larsen. And now the particular thing I want to say to you is—trust him."

"Trust him?"

"Yes; he has been fearful that you might misunderstand his motives in this which he has done. He has wanted to join the Church for some time, but he has put it off, fearing you would think he did it solely for you.. I believe

with the light and the testimony which he has, he would have joined the Church, even though there had been no Atelia Heldman waiting for him within. I believe this, and I want you to believe it also."

"Yes, I will; thank you," she almost whispered.

"That's all; now, let us go back to our company. No tears, Sister; put on your brightest face, for you have reasons to do so."

Frue Steen had entertained, in her day, the "best society" in the land, and had done it in the most approved manner; but now she had listened to Halvor's suggestion, and the drinking of the many "skaals" in as many kinds of wines had been eliminated as not proper for this gathering; even coffee was not served. It was not easy for Frue Steen to be reconciled to these innovations, but she did it as gracefully as possible.

Abstinence from forbidden things did not lessen the good cheer of the evening. There was music and singing, and Uncle Sande told one of the Telemarken Christmas fairy tales. Then, of course, there was the dinner, the eating of which took a long time. Around the table, the talk led to the prospects of so many of the company soon going to America. Atelia spoke of America rather than Zion, thinking that the first term would not grate so much on the ears of her uncle and Frue Steen, but these two people surprised the others by saying that they saw no

reason why every one present might not meet some day in a similar gathering in Utah.

"I say amen to that," answered the President.

And now, well towards midnight, when all others had retired, Halvor and Atelia were alone. All the evening, they had communicated to each other only by look and touch the fact that they understood, and they were supremely happy in the knowledge. Now they might use words to explain anything which might be lacking, and yet words, fitting and expressive enough, were not easy to find. But they could sit close together on the sofa, and he could press her braids close against his cheek; and in the shaded, mellowed lamp-light they could commune without words; for every barrier had now been removed between them; together they could go into the future, not only one in heart, but one in faith and the high purpose which the gospel had implanted in their hearts. All the misunderstandings of the past had been cleared, not by many words of theirs, but by the wonderful workings of the Lord—not the least instrument having been the kind Conference President. Oh, the joy of knowing each other as perfectly as imperfect mortals can!

"Atelia," he said softly, "you are mine now—you will be mine forever."

"Yes, Halvor, I wanted to be with you forever—I wanted to be yours always—that's why, Halvor, that's why!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

HALVOR AND ATELIA BEGIN RIGHT.



MARRIED, yesterday, in the Temple, Miss Atelia Heldman and Mr. Halvor Steen. The bride is the beautiful and talented young lady, who, some two years ago, captured a prize at a sailing of the Norwegian National Regatta. The bridegroom is a capable salesman of the Enterprise Mercantile Company."—Newspaper announcement.

Atelia had been in Utah nearly a year, Halvor, six months. Atelia had made her home with Sister Nordo and Helga. Halvor and Atelia had looked the city over for a house, and they had found a six-roomed cottage well suited to their tastes and means. They could have begun with less, but Frue Steen was expected soon, and she would live with them.

From the Temple, Halvor and Atelia went to Sister Nordo's, where a few friends and supper were awaiting them. Among the visitors were Waldemar Larsen and his wife who had come from their home in Sanpete for the occasion. The Christiania Conference President, lately returned, was also present. There were many other dear friends of the newly-married couple who would receive invitations to visit them later, but both Halvor and Atelia had agreed that the day of their marriage was too sacred to be unduly

and unnecessarily disturbed by a big and perhaps a noisy company.

The evening passed pleasantly; the guests left early; and then Halvor and Atelia walked to their own home through the moonlight of a clear October night.

Sister Nordo had been there before them. There was a smouldering fire in the grate, and a faint odor of "king's incense" pervaded the room, giving it an old-home touch of remembrance. Halvor switched on the light, and when wraps had been put away and the coals in the grate made to blaze, he turned it off again. Then he drew up two easy chairs to the grate.

"Here we are," said Halvor, "man and wife, by the home-fire. The open fire is a reversion to the times of our Viking forefathers, but it's a very fine coming back to first principles."

Atelia did not reply. She appeared a little tired, as she rested her head on the back of the chair. The clock, a present from Helga, ticked cosily on the mantle. Above it on the wall hung the model from which the "Bue Bird" had been built. On the table, standing in the central place of honor and surrounded by a few simple wedding presents, the prize cup which Atelia had won, shone red from the fire. Back on the shadowed wall hung an oil painting of a Norwegian fjord, flanked on one side by a photograph of Heimstad, and on the other by a portrait of Captain Heldman.

"Atelia," said Halvor, "come here to me." He held out his arms. She looked up, smiled, came to him, and nestled into his embrace. Then he went on talking quietly though somewhat disjointedly.

"You are tired," he said. "We've had a long day.... We'll need to think a lot of what we've seen and heard.... From now on, we race in the same boat, if there is to be any racing.... I'm the captain, too, remember.... Elder Larsen is looking fine, isn't he? What a sweet wife he has! You remember he told us about her—the girl who was waiting for him.... That was a genuine Norwegian dinner Sister Nordo gave us, wasn't it, even to the raspberry pudding.... Did you read mother's letter?.... What did you make of Uncle Sande's last epistle—I believe he's converted.... Are you asleep?"

He pushed the hair from his wife's forehead to see if she was awake. With wide-open eyes she was looking into the fire in the grate.

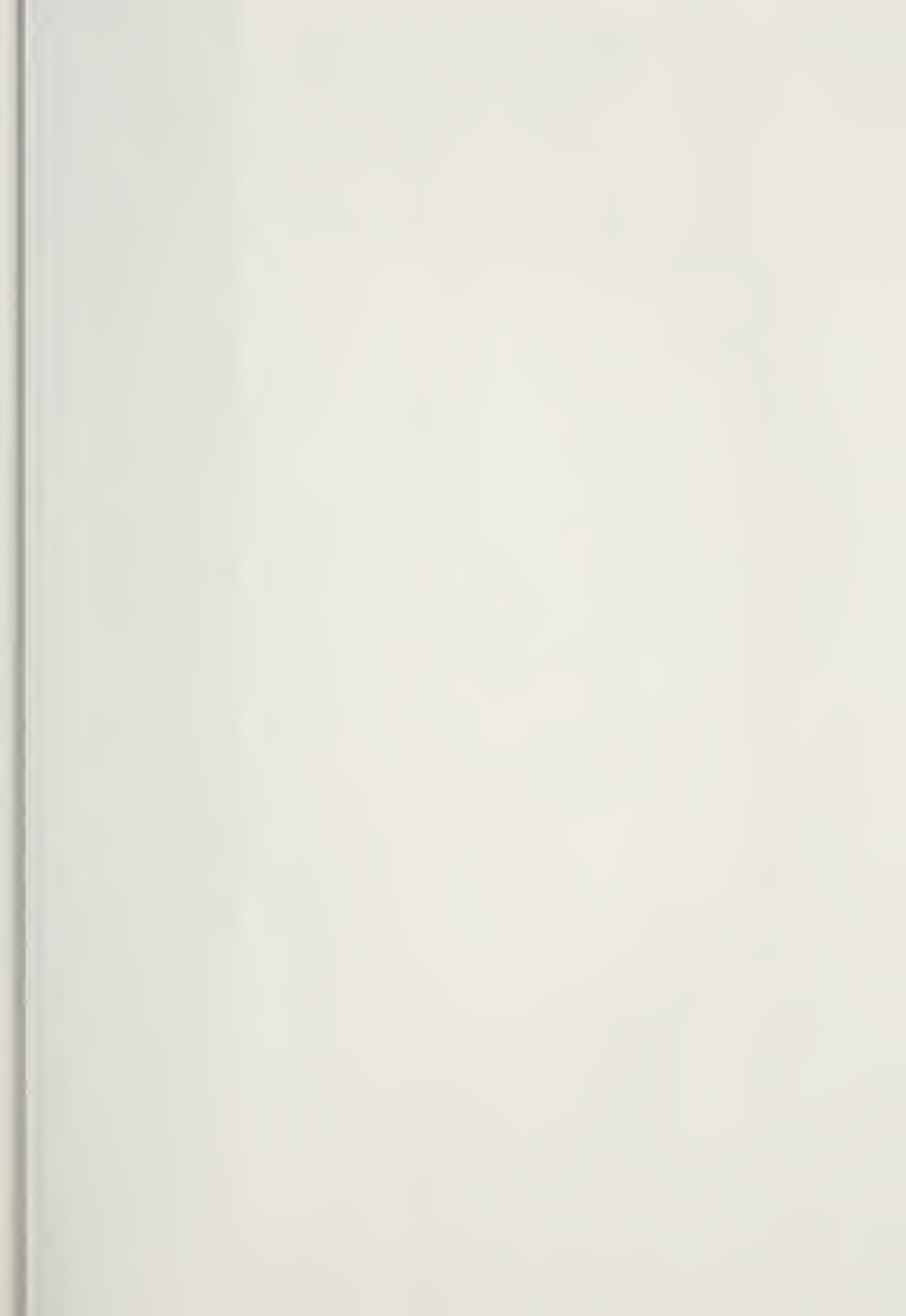
"Wasn't it beautiful?" she said.

"Wasn't what beautiful?"

"The ceremony that made us husband and wife for time and eternity. It was worth all our waiting, wasn't it, to be able to begin right?"

He raised her head and looked into her glowing eyes. Then he sealed his affirmation with a kiss.

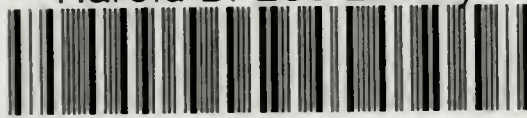
THE END.



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